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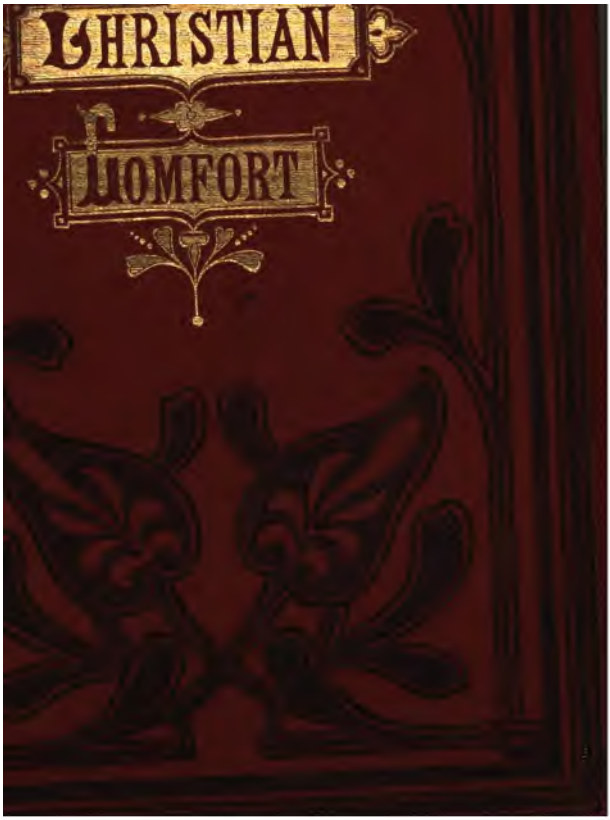
CHRISTIAN
COMFORT

CHRISTIAN COMFORT.

" From darkness here and dreariness
We ask not full repose,
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up earth's dark glade,
The gate of Heaven unclose?"

KEBLE.

CHRISTIAN COMFORT.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "EMBLEMS OF JESUS."

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PREFACE.

THE following papers are intended to illustrate some of those gracious declarations of God's holy Word, which are fitted to comfort and encourage the Christian pilgrim in his journey Zion-ward. The thoughts, which the author has ventured to suggest on the various topics under consideration, have frequently soothed and cheered his own mind in seasons of perplexity and sorrow; and he humbly hopes they may minister similar consolation to the minds of others also in their time of need. May God grant, that what he has here written may, indeed, prove "words in season to them

that are weary," that thus he "may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he himself is comforted of God!"

Prayer.

When I survey life's varied scene,
  Amid the darkest hours,
Sweet rays of comfort shine between,
  And thorns are mix'd with flowers.

Lord, teach me to adore Thy hand,
  From whence my comforts flow,
And let me in this desert land
  A glimpse of Canaan know.

And, oh, whate'er of earthly bliss
  Thy sovereign hand denies,
Accepted at Thy throne of grace,
  Let this petition rise:

Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
  From every murmur free;
The blessings of Thy grace impart,
  And let me live to Thee.

Let the sweet hope, that Thou art mine,
  My path of life attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine,
  And bless its happy end.

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CHRISTIAN COMFORT.

Divine Care.

Ps. xxxiii. 18, 19.

"Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear Him, upon them that hope in His mercy: to deliver their soul from death, and to keep them alive in famine."

Ps. cxxv. 1, 2.

"They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth, even for ever."

Zech. ii. 8.

"He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye."

Matt. vi. 34.

"Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Matt. x. 29–31.

"Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows."

1 Cor. vii. 32.

"But I would have you without carefulness."

Luke xii. 22, 23.

"Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment."

Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into His hands,
To His sure truth and tender care,
Who earth and heaven commands.

No profit canst thou gain
By self-consuming care;
To Him commend thy cause; His ear
Attends the softest prayer.

Thy everlasting truth,
Father! Thy ceaseless love,
Sees all Thy children's wants, and knows
What best for each will prove.

And whatsoe'er Thou will'st,
Thou dost, O King of kings;
What Thy unerring Wisdom chose,
Thy Power to being brings.

Give to the winds thy fears;
Hope, and be undismay'd;
God hears thy sighs, and counts thy tears;
God shall lift up thy head.

Through waves, and clouds, and storms,
He gently clears thy way;
Wait thou His time; so shall this night
Soon end in joyous day.

JOHN WESLEY,
(*From Paul Gerhardt.*)

1 Pet. v. 7.

"He careth for you."

THE path of the believer, no less than that of the man of the world, is beset with many distressing cares and anxieties. These flow in upon him from every source and channel; indeed, at no period, and in no situation of life, can he promise himself exemption from them. In society and in solitude, in health and in sickness, in prosperity and in adversity, amidst all the varieties of his external condition, and in spite of all the barriers he can raise to prevent their approach, he will daily find many painful anxieties arising within him, which disturb the peace of his soul, and which, if they be not cast upon his God, nothing either within or without himself can ever relieve. But it is his comfort to know, that, how heavy soever may be the burden that oppresses him, he is the object of

the constant care and superintendence of an infinitely wise, powerful, and good God, without whose appointment or permission nothing can befall him, and who is ever ministering to his safety and happiness.

There is, indeed, a sense in which God careth for all men without exception. "He is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being."—"His visitations preserve our spirits."—"He holds our soul in life, and suffers not our feet to be moved." At no period has He ever "left Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." And so unlimited is His providence, and so minute is His care, that the very "hairs of our head are all numbered." It is not, however, to the general providential care which God has of men as His creatures that the apostle here refers, but to that *peculiar and affectionate regard* which He has for His people, the persons of whom He speaks being described, in a preceding part of the Epistle, as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and

sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ,"—as "called out of darkness into marvellous light," —and as "being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." For them God careth in another manner than He doth for the irreligious and ungodly. We may not, indeed, be able to explain the mode in which this special care is exerted; but with respect to the fact itself, the Scriptures leave no room for doubt. It is expressly declared, that "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is set against them that do evil."—"The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble, and He knoweth them that trust in Him."—"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him; for He knoweth our frame: He remembereth we are dust."

In addition to these general declarations, our heavenly Father has been pleased to give us a variety of precious promises, which are applicable to all the necessities of His children, so that, in whatever state and circumstances they may be placed, they will find some gracious declaration of God, which exactly suits their

case. Is the believer *trembling and fearful, and exposed to danger?* The promise is, "The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil, He shall preserve thy soul."—"Fear thou not, for I am with thee. Be not dismayed, for I am thy God." Is he *in doubt and difficulty?* The promise is, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." Is he *persecuted and distressed?* The promise is, "The Lord will be a refuge for the oppressed; a refuge in times of trouble." Is he *poor and friendless?* The promise is, "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also, and him that hath no helper." Does he *mourn over sin, and yearn after purity of heart?* The promise is, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."—"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Is he *chained to a bed of sickness?* The promise is, "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing. Thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness." Is he *exposed to temptation?* The promise is, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is

made perfect in weakness." Is he *in bondage through the fear of death?* The promise is, "He will swallow up death in victory."—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death." And, as if all these promises had not been sufficient to inspire us with confidence, we are assured, that "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly," and that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."—"He who testifies these things is a true and faithful witness."—"He is not a man that He should lie, neither the Son of man that He should repent; hath He said, and shall He not do it? or hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?"

Reader, have you not, in your own experience, found that He is faithful who hath promised, and that not one of His declarations has ever yet been forfeited? In looking back on all the way which the Lord your God has led you, have you not had abundant evidence of that ever-waking care which He extends to them who put their trust in Him? Has He not led you by a way that you knew not?

Has He not guarded you from a thousand unseen dangers? Has He not cared for your interests, even when you yourself had been negligent of them? When the bitterness of affliction has led you to distrust His gracious providence, and cherish hard thoughts concerning Him, has not the result ofttimes shewn that He has been dealing with you in mercy, and that even His severest chastisements were but proofs and tokens of His paternal care? "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

If God thus careth for you, how great is your encouragement to "*cast all your care upon Him!*" For, consider how well fitted is His character to inspire a feeling of entire reliance on Him, in every season of need and perplexity. He is *infinitely wise*, and is, therefore, perfectly acquainted with all your wants, and can never be deceived as to what is most conducive to your truest and most permanent good. He is

infinitely powerful, and, therefore, can easily perform whatever His unerring wisdom shall suggest. He is *infinitely good*, and, therefore, is always disposed to employ His wisdom in contriving, and His power in executing, whatever is necessary for your interest and happiness. Nay, He has already *sent His only-begotten Son to die for you;* and, as the apostle reasons, "If God spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" With what entire confidence, then, may you not cast your cares upon such a God! Away, therefore, with those inordinate anxieties, and corroding cares, which so often interfere both with your duty and with your comfort. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid;" but hear and obey with thankfulness and delight, the gracious counsel of everlasting truth. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee; He will never suffer the righteous to be moved." "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind

through Christ Jesus." Be this, then, the language of your soul:—

"O most merciful God, who never failest them that trust in Thee, give me grace, I beseech Thee, in all my difficulties and distresses, to stay my mind on Thee. Suffer not my heart to be overcharged with the cares of this life—taking anxious thought what I shall eat, or drink, or wherewithal I shall be clothed; but grant that, having by honest labour and industry done my part, I may cheerfully commit myself to Thy providence, casting all my care upon Thee, and being careful for nothing, but to be of the number of those whom Thou ownest and carest for, even such as keep Thy testimonies, and think upon Thy commandments to do them; that seeking first Thy kingdom, and the righteousness thereof, all these outward things may be added unto me, in such a measure as Thy wisdom knows to be most conducive to my spiritual and eternal welfare."

Be still, my heart, these anxious cares
To thee are burdens, thorns, and snares;
They cast dishonour on thy Lord,
And contradict His gracious word.

Brought safely by His hand thus far,
Why wilt thou now give place to fear?
How canst thou want if He provide,
Or lose thy way with such a guide?

Did ever trouble yet befall,
And He refuse to hear thy call?
And has He not His promise pass'd,
That thou shalt overcome at last?

He who has helped me hitherto,
Will help me all my journey through,
And give me daily cause to raise
New Ebenezers to His praise.

My spirit on Thy care,
Blest Saviour, I recline;
Thou wilt not leave me to despair,
For Thou art Love Divine.

In Thee I place my trust,
On Thee I calmly rest;
I know Thee good, I know Thee just,
And count Thy choice the best.

Whate'er events betide,
Thy will they all perform;
Safe in Thy breast my head I hide,
Nor fear the coming storm.

Let good or ill befall,
It must be good for me,
Secure of having Thee in all,
Of having all in Thee.

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE.

O Lord, I would delight in Thee,
And on Thy care depend;
To Thee in every trouble flee,
My best, my only Friend.

When all created streams are dried,
Thy fulness is the same;
May I with this be satisfied,
And glory in Thy name!

Why should the soul a drop bemoan,
  Who has a fountain near;
A fountain which will ever run
  With waters sweet and clear?

No good in creatures can be found,
  But may be found in Thee;
I must have all things, and abound,
  While God is God to me.

Oh that I had a stronger faith,
  To look within the vail!
To credit what my Saviour saith,
  Whose word can never fail.

He that has made my heaven secure,
  Will here all good provide;
While Christ is rich, can I be poor?
  What can I want beside?

O Lord, I cast my care on Thee;
  I triumph and adore;
Henceforth my great concern shall be
  To love and please Thee more.

JOHN RYLAND.

The Promised Presence.

DEUT. xxxi. 8.

"And the Lord, He it is that doth go before thee; He will be with thee, He will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed."

ISA. xli. 10.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."

ISA. xliii. 2, 3.

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

PHILIP. i. 6.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."

HEB. xiii. 5, 6.

"Let your conversation be without coveteousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, *I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

1 JOHN iv. 4.

"Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world."

Abide with me! fast falls the even-tide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me abide!
When other helpers fail and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, abide with me!

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim; its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, who changest not, abide with me!

Come not in terrors, as the King of kings;
But kind and good, with healing in Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for every plea;
Come, Friend of sinners, and thus 'bide with me!

I need Thy presence every passing hour;
What but Thy grace can foil the Tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, oh, abide with me!

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless;
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness;
Where is death's sting? where, Grave, thy victory?
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me!

Hold then Thy cross before my closing eyes!
Shine through the gloom, and point me to the skies!
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life and death, O Lord, abide with me!

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE.

GEN. xxviii. 15.

"And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

THESE words were originally addressed to the patriarch Jacob, when on his way towards Syria. Having, at the instigation of his mother, imposed upon Isaac, and fraudulently obtained the blessing, he was now fleeing to avoid the effects of his brother's indignation. Sorrowfully, and alone, he had set out from his father's house at Beersheba; a long and wearisome journey of at least four hundred and fifty miles lay before him: and he knew not to what dangers and temptations he might be exposed in the country to which he was going, or whether he should ever return again in safety. At the close of his first day's travel, he was overtaken by nightfall in the fields of Luz, where, wearied with his

long and toilsome march beneath an Eastern sun, he laid himself down to rest under the open canopy of heaven, with the cold ground for his bed, and a stone for his pillow. But hard as was his couch, his dreams were sweet, and the vision, which he there beheld, of a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with the angels of God ascending and descending on it, instructed him, that, though he was now an exile from his native land, and traversing alone an inhospitable wild, yet was he encompassed by the presence and protection of the Almighty, whose angels pitched their camps about his bed, and under the shadow of whose wings he might rest in safety and in peace. And this encouraging truth, so impressively taught by the significant imagery of the heavenly vision, was as fully corroborated by the Divine address made to Jacob in connexion with it. For, while solemnly ratifying therein the promises made before to Abraham and Isaac, the Lord at the same time assured him, that however he might be an alien from his father's house, he should not be cast away from His presence, and that He would be his guide and guardian wherever he should go.

The cheering assurance thus addressed to

Jacob extends to all his spiritual seed. Like him, they are travelling onwards through a wild and inhospitable desert, to another and a better country, even an heavenly one; and in what terms does their merciful Father address them at the outset of their heavenward journey? Does He not still say unto them, "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest?" Oh, how encouraging are these words! In whatever circumstances the Christian may be placed, the assurance which they convey of the Divine presence is sufficient to enliven every scene and sweeten every condition. Its realisation opens springs of joy in the cheerless waste of this desert world; it dissipates the thickest darkness, soothes the anguish of the keenest affliction, and lightens the heaviest load of poverty and distress.

God is present, indeed, with all His creatures. Heaven is His throne, and the earth His footstool. All nature is His temple—all space His abode—and never has He, for one moment, been absent from any part of His boundless dominions. But *He is present in a peculiar sense* with the people, whom He has formed for Himself, to shew forth His praise. They are the

objects of His special attention. He is present with others, as a God of infinite power, justice, and goodness, as their Inspector, Judge, and Preserver; but He is present with His people as a God of infinite grace, love, and tenderness, as their Guide, Saviour, and Friend. And never is He nearer to them than in times of loneliness and sorrow. It was when Jacob needed Him most—when he was friendless and companionless, a penitent and solitary pilgrim, far from the scenes of his youthful and happy days, oppressed with a desolating sense of his loneliness, and in total darkness and uncertainty with respect to his future fortunes—that God vouchsafed to him the most distinguished proofs of His gracious presence. Such, too, has been the comfortable experience of God's suffering people in every age. As their sorrows abounded, their consolations abounded so much the more. Comforted by their Lord's presence, exiled saints have made the desert echo with hymns of praise, and martyrs have sung joyfully in the midst of devouring flames.

But besides the animating assurance of His gracious presence, in the greatness of His condescension, the Lord vouchsafes to give us a pro-

mise of *preservation in all our ways.* "I will keep thee," He declares, "in all places whither thou goest." How faithfully was this gracious promise fulfilled in the life of Jacob! "He found him in a desert place, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him." And the same care and watchfulness are extended to all His people still. He who neither slumbers nor sleeps is the keeper of Israel. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him." "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them:" "He gives His angels charge over them to keep them in all their ways." Nothing can befall them which He does not know, and which He does not order for the advancement of their highest interests. If they are in affliction, He supports them under it. If, at any time, they stumble and fall, He takes them by the hand and lifts them up. If they

are in perplexity, He extricates them. If they are called to the discharge of arduous and difficult duties, He gives them His grace, and makes it sufficient for them, and perfects His strength in their weakness. In short, "as are their days, so is their strength." How great, then, is the security enjoyed by those, who are under the direction and guardianship of their Heavenly Father! With what confidence and comfort may they commit their ways unto Him! And how certainly will it appear in the end, that the paths by which He has led them have been the best and happiest for them!

In order still further to cheer and animate His people in their wilderness journey, their Heavenly Father gives them a solemn pledge, that His care and guardianship will be *constant and abiding*. "I will not leave thee," He adds, "until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And herein, also, the patriarch found, that the promise of God was faithful and true: for the Lord was with him, and kept him in the way which he went, prospered him in his undertaking, preserved him during a residence of twenty years at Padan-aram, and brought him again to his father's house in peace. Similar to this is

the experience of all His people, in every age. He will never leave them, nor forsake them. Amid all their wanderings, He is present to guide, strengthen, and comfort them. He may, indeed, "for a small moment," withdraw from them the experience of His presence, "nevertheless His loving-kindness will He not utterly take from them, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail." And when at length the purposes of His providence are finished with them, He will bring them into the promised land—a land of which Canaan, with all its beauty and fertility, was but the dim and shadowy representation; so that death, which is so terrible to others, will be to them but a translation from pathless wilds and desert solitudes, to fields of perpetual verdure and streams of ever-living water.

Reader, if you have taken up the pilgrim's staff, and set your face Zionward, let the promise of God's constant presence and protection inspire you with courage to "go forward." "For, if God be with you, who can be against you?" "Be strong, then, in the Lord, and in the power of His might." "Fear not, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." Though He may not always reveal Himself; though He

may lead you sometimes by a rugged path, and over a steep ascent; though the darkest clouds of sorrow may surround you, and the gloomiest prospects lie before you; though for a time even the light of His countenance be intercepted, and seem to be withdrawn, yet your Lord is with you. He is touched with a feeling of your infirmities; and in due time the day will dawn, the day-star will arise on your heart; and the shadows which surround you will flee away. Let this, then, be your prayer:—

"O Lord, who hast been the God of Thy people in all generations, be my covenant God, to preserve me amid all my sojournings through the wilderness of this world, and to bring me at length to the heavenly Canaan. I am exposed to many enemies and dangers, and in myself am feeble and helpless, but wherever Thou art pleased to direct me to go, oh, may I find that Thy gracious presence is with me. And on the hour of my departure may I be able to say, Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for *Thou art with me;* Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me."

Lord! it is not life to live
If Thy presence Thou deny:
Lord! if Thou Thy presence give,
'Tis no longer death to die.
Source and Giver of repose,
Only from Thy smile it flows;
Peace and happiness are Thine;
Mine they are, if Thou art mine.

TOPLADY.

Thus far on life's perplexing path,
Thus far the Lord our steps hath led;
Safe from the world's pursuing wrath,
Unharm'd though floods hang o'er our head:
Here then we pause, look back, adore,
Like ransom'd Israel from the shore.

Strangers and pilgrims here below,
As all our fathers in their day,
We to a Land of Promise go,
Lord! by Thine own appointed way;
Still guide, illumine, cheer our flight,
In cloud by day, in fire by night.

Protect us through this wilderness
From serpent plague, and hostile rage;

With bread from heaven our table bless,
With living streams our thirst assuage;
Nor let our rebel hearts repine,
Or follow any voice but Thine.

Thy righteous laws to us proclaim,
But not from Sinai's top alone;
Hid in the rock-clift, be Thy name,
Thy power, and all Thy goodness shewn:
And may we never bow the knee
To any other gods but Thee!

Thy presence with us move or rest;
And as the eagle o'er her brood
Flutters her pinions, stirs the nest,
Covers, defends, provides them food,
Bears on her wings, instructs to fly;—
Thus, thus prepare us for the sky.

When we have number'd all our years,
And stand at length on Jordan's brink,
Though the flesh fail with human fears,
Oh, let not then the spirit shrink,
But, strong in faith, and hope, and love,
Plunge through the stream,—to rise above!

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

Nearer, my God, to Thee,
  Nearer to Thee!
E'en though it be a cross
  That raiseth me;
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
  Nearer to Thee!

Though like the wanderer,
  The sun gone down,
Darkness be over me,
  My rest a stone;
Yet in my dreams I'd be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
  Nearer to Thee!

There let the way appear
  Steps unto heaven;
All that Thou send'st to me
  In mercy given;
Angels to beckon me
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
  Nearer to Thee!

Then with my waking thoughts
  Bright with Thy praise,

Out of my stony griefs
  Bethel I'll raise;
So by my woes to be
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
  Nearer to Thee!

Or if on joyful wing
  Cleaving the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars forgot,
  Upwards I fly,
Still all my song shall be,
Nearer, my God, to Thee,
  Nearer to Thee!

SARAH FLOWER ADAMS.

Hope.

PROV. x. 28.

"The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish."

ROM. viii. 24, 25.

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it."

COL. i. 5.

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel."

COL. iii. 2.

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth."

TIT. iii. 7.

"That being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

1 PET. i. 3–5.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

Far from my heavenly home,
Far from my Father's breast,
Fainting I cry, 'Blest Spirit! come
And speed me to my rest!'

Upon the willows long
My harp has silent hung:
How should I sing a cheerful song
Till Thou inspire my tongue?

My spirit homeward turns,
And fain would thither flee;
My heart, O Zion, droops and yearns,
When I remember Thee.

To thee, to thee, I press,
A dark and toilsome road;
When shall I pass the wilderness
And reach the saints' abode?

God of my life, be near!
On Thee my hopes I cast;
Oh, guide me through the desert here,
And bring me home at last!

HENRY FRANCIS LYTE.

2 Thess. ii. 16.

"God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and *good hope* through grace."

OF all the supports and consolations which our Heavenly Father hath provided for the Christian pilgrim, the hope of a happy and glorious immortality in heaven is unquestionably the strongest. Nothing on this side the grave is so sweet or joyful. Truly, it is "a blessed hope." It is a beam from the everlasting light, shining on the upright, in the midst of darkness. It is a well of living water, in the burning desert of affliction, springing up to refresh and reinvigorate the weary, way-worn traveller. It is an helmet, by which the soldier of the cross is enabled to ward off the fiery darts of the wicked one, in the day of conflict. It is "an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," by which the frail bark of the Christian mariner is enabled

to outride all the storms and perils of life's tempestuous sea, and is brought at last in safety into the haven of eternal peace.

The cheering and comforting influence of hope is often strikingly exhibited in human life, even when the objects with which it is conversant are merely temporal. What is it, for instance, that enables the prisoner to bear the weight of his chains, and to endure the privations and sorrows of his solitary cell? It is the hope, that he shall one day come forth from his prison-house, and taste again the sweets of liberty. What is it that sustains the soldier, under the hardships of a lengthened campaign, or amidst the terrors of the day of battle? It is the hope, that there shall come a time, when, all his fatigues and dangers being past, he shall visit once more his beloved fatherland, and rejoice in the pleasures of home. Hope cheers the ploughman in his field, and all the labourers of earth, amidst their many toils; it expands the seaman's sail, and bears him patiently through the perils of the deep; it travels with the wayfarer, telling him, amidst the fatigues of his journey, of the resting-place at the end. It is the universal comforter, and the spring of all

human activity. Upon futurity, men are constantly suspended. Animated by the prospect of some future good, they toil and suffer throughout the whole course of their existence; and it is not so much what they are at present, as what they hope to be at some future period, that enlivens their motions, engages their attention, and stimulates their industry.

Now, if such be the wonderful energy of hope, in reference to temporal things, when its object is neither very considerable, nor very certain, what effects may it not be expected to produce, when it rests upon an object so splendid, and so infallibly secure, as a life of immortal glory and felicity in heaven? What, in the course of human affairs, can distress, far less overwhelm, the mind of that man, who can behold the things of this world from an elevation so much above them? If he is visited with the loss of worldly property and wealth, hope whispers, that he has in heaven "an enduring substance," and he "takes joyfully the spoiling of his goods." If those near and dear to him are torn from his side by the ruthless hand of death, he sorrows not "even as others who have no hope," but is consoled by the belief, that "them also, that

sleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him." If sickness, or disappointment, oppression, or persecution should befall him, none of these things move him, for hope assures him, that his "light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh out for him a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." Even when death, "the last enemy," approaches, hope imparts to his soul a serene and heavenly composure, for he knows "in whom he hath believed," and is persuaded that his Redeemer is able to "keep that which he hath committed unto Him against that day." And thus, how grievous soever his sorrows may seem, there is a power in that hope, which God hath given him, of holding fast the Christian, and preventing him from casting away that "confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

Most justly is this Christian grace styled a "*good* hope." For, unlike the delusive day-dreams of the children of this world, which terminate on the vain and fleeting trifles of time, the believer's hope has for its object real and substantial *good*, even that "eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." It is not confined merely to the present state of existence. It passes "the flaming

bounds of time and space; it ascends above the perishable heavens, and stretches forward its views, and grasps the eternal realities of the world of glory."

It rests, also, upon a *good foundation*, being built, not on the shifting sand, but on Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages. Those who possess it, therefore, shall never be ashamed, nor confounded world without end. Nothing can ever destroy it; it will remain firm and steadfast, not only when all things are well and prosperous around the Christian, but also when the firmament of his existence is dark with clouds, and the waters of affliction are lashed into fury. The glorious objects on which it rests cannot be affected by any change in the things of earth and time. The rains may descend, the floods beat, and the winds blow; but it abides unshaken, for it is founded upon a Rock.

Reader, examine well what is the nature and ground of your hope. The world is overrun with false hopes; and dreadful it is to think, what multitudes, under the influence of these, go down to the grave, with a lie in their right hand, and never discover their sad mistake until it is too late. If you would escape such dire

disappointment, be it your care to build your hope of heaven upon the right foundation; for "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Every other ground of hope is a refuge of lies. It may deceive your soul for a time, but when the flood of Jehovah's wrath shall at last burst forth against the impenitent and unbelieving, it will be utterly swept away, and leave you without a shelter or a home. Flee, then, for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before you in the gospel. That hope will support you amid all the trials and afflictions of your earthly pilgrimage, and when you approach the confines of the dark valley of the shadow of death, it will cheer and animate your fainting spirit, and will cast over the gloomy prospect a ray of heavenly glory, so that, "at eventide, there shall be light." Be this, then, your prayer:—

"O God of hope, be pleased to fill me with all joy and peace in believing, that I may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. May I habitually strive to purify myself, even as Thou art pure, and finally be made meet for the mansions of glory, where hope shall

be lost in the enjoyment of Thine everlasting love."

What is thy hope? Will it stand the test
Of nature's expiring hour?
Like armour of proof, will it shield thy breast,
Against the grim tyrant's power?
Will it gladden thy soul, and dispel the gloom,
The horrors of darkness that veil the tomb,
When the damps of death to thy brow shall start,
And the life-blood ebbs from thy freezing heart?
Away with it else—it is worse than vain
To cherish a hope that will fail thee then.

But hope thou in Christ! to a dying hour
This hope sweet assurance brings,
When worldly preferments, and wealth, and power,
Shall all be forgotten things.
Yes, hope thou in Christ, though a feeble worm,
And thy soul shall be safe and thy confidence firm;

Thou shalt traverse in triumph the gloomy
abyss
Which divides the eternal world from this;
And consigning in hope thy frail flesh to the
sod,
Thy soul shall ascend to thy Saviour and God.

When, wearied with life's ebb and flow,
We for still waters sigh;
Oh, how it sweetens change below,
To know there 's rest on high!

Thus we in peace our souls possess,
Though all around be fear,
Full of the blessed consciousness
That heaven is sure and near.

Dark clouds may o'er us threatening stand,
We can sing on and smile,
The sunshine of the sunless land
Lies round us all the while.

We can bear any cross or grief,
If, with their gloom, be given
This one sweet secret of relief,
To keep our thoughts in heaven.

MONSELL

Hope, with uplifted foot set free from earth,
Pants for the place of its ethereal birth;
On steady wings flies through th' immense abyss,
Plucks amaranthine joys from bowers of bliss;
And crowns the soul while yet a sufferer here,
With wreaths like those angelic spirits wear.

So flits the world's uncertain span!
Nor zeal for God, nor love for man,
Gives mortal monuments a date
Beyond the power of Time and Fate.
The towers must share the builder's doom:
Ruin is theirs, and his a tomb;
But better boon benignant Heaven
To Faith and Charity has given,
And bids the Christian hope sublime
Transcend the bounds of Fate and Time.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The Right Way.

DEUT. viii. 2.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no."

DEUT. xxxii. 10-12.

"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him."

JOB xxxv. 14.

"Although thou sayest thou shalt not see Him, yet judgment is before Him: therefore trust thou in Him."

PS. cxlv. 17.

"The Lord is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works."

2 COR. iv. 17.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

1 PET. i. 6, 7.

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

God moves in a mysterious way
  His wonders to perform;
He plants His footsteps in the sea,
  And rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines
  Of never-failing skill,
He treasures up His bright designs,
  And works His sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take;
  The clouds ye so much dread
Are big with mercy, and shall break
  In blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
  But trust Him for His grace;
Behind a frowning providence
  He hides a smiling face.

His purposes shall ripen fast,
  Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
  But sweet will be the flower.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
  And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
  And He will make it plain.

WILLIAM COWPER.

Ps. cvii. 7.

"And He led them forth by *the right way*, that they might go to a city of habitation."

THE dealings of God towards His chosen people are often marked by inscrutable mystery. "His way is in the sea, and His path in the mighty waters, and His footsteps are not known." But although clouds and darkness are round about Him, righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. He doeth all things wisely and well; and if we but patiently wait for Him, He will, in His own good time, give us abundant reason to acknowledge, that "*all* His paths are mercy and truth, unto such as keep His covenant and His testimonies."

How wonderful were the Divine dealings, as set forth in the journeyings of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan! The way by which Jehovah conducted them was circuitous, and most discouraging. Instead of leading them

"through the way of the land of the Philistines," although that was near, He sent them "through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea." By this course their journeyings were extended to the long period of forty years, during which they had to travel through a dangerous and desolate country—"a waste howling wilderness," as it is emphatically called; "a land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought, and of the shadow of death; a land that no man passed through, and where no man dwelt." Notwithstanding all these discouraging circumstances, however, every step of their way was directed by infinite wisdom and goodness, and tended but to fulfil the gracious purpose of the Almighty Leader, to humble, and to prove them, and to do them good at their latter end.

And even thus does He still deal with all who are travelling to the celestial city. He overrules the most unpromising circumstances to the promotion of His own glory in their eternal salvation. Though He suffers them to continue for a season in the wilderness, He will bring them in safety, and conduct them to a city of habitation. All the trials and discouragements under which they are now ready to

faint, are working together for their truest and most permanent good. And how frequently have they, on taking a retrospective view of God's dealings towards them, seen cause to rejoice in those very events and circumstances, which, at one time, they thought too much for them to bear! And surely, if it be so, even in this world of darkness and imperfection, where we are now wandering, as it were, amid the gloom and labyrinth of the wilderness, we may reasonably suppose, that it will be much more so, in the world of glory hereafter, when all the mists of prejudice and error shall be perfectly and for ever dispelled, and when the ways of God shall be fully vindicated to man. Then shall it appear to every happy soul, that *however rugged and tedious* may have been the way by which it was conducted to that city of eternal habitation, yet it was the *right* way, and that the discipline, of which it most complained, was that for which it had the greatest reason to be thankful. It will then be seen, and thankfully owned, that there was no bitter ingredient in their cup that could have been spared; no affliction but what was working out for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Christian, are you called to pass through the *wilderness?* Then, *how much do you need direction, comfort, and strength!* Blessed be God! these are supplied in abundant measure, and to every believer the promise is sure—"as thy days, so shall thy strength be." He, who was with Israel in the wilderness, still goes before you in your way to Zion. Be not therefore "discouraged because of the way," but look more simply and confidently to Christ, remembering that He knows most accurately and intimately the way you should take, that He is omnipotent to defend you from its diversified perils, that He has promised to direct all your steps, and preserve all your goings, that "greater is He who is with you than all that are against you," and that there is not a sorrow, there is not a trial, there is not a dark and apparently adverse dispensation of Divine Providence, be it what it may, that is not being made subservient to your everlasting welfare.

Is the wilderness the *right* way? Then it behoves you to *submit with patience to all the hardships and difficulties which you may encounter in travelling through it.* These, so far from being arbitrary evils, are a salutary training for

your safe and certain progress. All that is now imposed upon you has been sent by a God who "doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." And if you only "hear the rod, and Him who hath appointed it," you will find that, behind every dark cloud, there is the smile of a Heavenly Father's love. For "whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Whatever, then, may be the number, the severity, or the duration of your pilgrim toils and sufferings, commit your soul with confidence to your Divine Leader, assured that they are but proofs and tokens of His paternal love and care, that such discipline is essential to your highest welfare, that, but for it, you would be in danger of forgetting God, idolising the world, and neglecting salvation, and that the time is not far distant, when, the trials of the wilderness being past, you shall cross the swellings of Jordan, and when, in the enjoyment of the good land and the large, which "God hath prepared for them that love Him," you shall be called to remember all the way by which He has been pleased to lead you, and to acknowledge with thousands who have gone before you, that He

hath indeed "led you forth by the right way, that you might go to the city of habitation." Be this, then, your daily prayer:—

"O most mighty and glorious God, who didst guide the wanderings of Thy chosen people in the waste howling wilderness, and, with bread from heaven and water from the rock, didst sustain them; guide and direct me in this the land of my pilgrimage; sustain my weary and fainting soul with the refreshing consolations of Thy Spirit, until I enter the good land, which Thou hast sworn to give to those who love Thee."

Leader Divine! I'll follow Thee
  Whate'er my life betide,
Whilst toiling o'er life's rugged waste,
  A wilderness so wide;
Assured that all will issue well,
  If Thou be still my Guide.

Though densest clouds obscure the way,
  A pillar bright I see;

Thy word shall chase the gloom, and make
My dark forebodings flee:
Thine arm, though Amalek assail,
Obtain the victory.

O Thou whose mercy guides my way,
Though now it seem severe,
Forbid my unbelief to say,
There is no mercy here!

Oh, grant me to desire the pain
That comes in kindness down,
More than the world's supremest gain
Succeeded by a frown.

Then, though Thou bend my spirit low,
Love only shall I see;
The very hand that strikes the blow
Was wounded once for me.

EDMESTON.

The Bow in the Cloud.

2 Sam. xxiii. 5.

"Although my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow."

Isa. lv. 3.

"Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David."

Jer. xxxi. 33, 34.

"But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be My people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Heb. viii. 6.

"But now hath He obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also He is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

Rev. iv. 3.

"And He that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald."

Still round Thy throne the rainbow shines,
Fair emblem of Thy kind designs!
Bright pledge! that spake Thy covenant sure,
Long as Thy kingdom shall endure,
No more shall deluges of woe
Thy new-created world o'erflow!
Jesus, our Sun, His beams displays,
And gilds the clouds with beauteous rays!
No gems so bright! no form so fair!
Mercy and Truth shall triumph there.
Thy saints shall bless the peaceful sign,
When stars and suns forget to shine.
E'en here, while storms, and gloomy shade,
And horrors all the scene o'erspread,
Faith views the throne with piercing eye,
And boasts the rainbow still is nigh.

GEN. ix. 14.

"And it shall come to pass, when I bring a cloud over the earth, that the bow shall be seen in the cloud."

SUCH was the gracious promise made by God to Noah and his family, shortly after the waters of the deluge had assuaged and abated from off the face of the earth. And how faithfully has that promise been fulfilled! More than four thousand years have passed over our world since it was first given, and still the beautiful rainbow, with its bright and varied colours, flings its ample arch across the heavens.

Whatever may have been the time of its first appearance, it was, beyond all controversy, selected by God as the sign and seal of that covenant, in which He pledged Himself to Noah and his posterity, that He would not again destroy the earth by water.

"And now the solemn covenant He swore,
That He would flood the new-born land no more;
Then rays from heaven with tears from earth He blent,
And wrote His promise on the firmament."

Nor could a more appropriate or significant token have been appointed. Whenever the rainbow appears, it is a sign of the aqueous state of the atmosphere; and never does it shine forth more beautifully than when the clouds are the most densely charged with vapours, and threaten the heaviest showers. Thus, when there is the greatest prospect of the rain prevailing, God presents this seal of the covenant as the pledge of our security.

But "the bow in the cloud" is not only the token of the covenant which God made with Noah; it is also emblematic of the everlasting covenant of peace—that covenant which is in all things well ordered and sure. In allusion to this typical sign of the new covenant, the enraptured seer, when an exile in the solitary isle of Patmos, is said to have beheld in vision

a rainbow encircling the throne of God. The rainbow is thus a beautiful memorial of the security of God's covenant-people from that awful deluge of Divine wrath, which shall at last be poured out upon all the finally unbelieving and ungodly. It forms a pledge, whereever it is contemplated, that the many great and precious promises which the God of heaven hath given us, are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus, and will infallibly receive their completion; for "He is not a man that He should lie; nor the son of man, that He should repent: hath He said it, and shall He not do it? hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" —"For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For this is as the waters of Noah unto me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but My kind-

ness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of My peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee."

The sight of the rainbow reminds us, that all the blessings of God's gracious covenant flow from Jesus Christ. Without the sun, there would be no rainbow; for it is the reflection and refraction of the solar rays in the drops of falling rain that occasion that splendid meteor. In like manner, without Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, there would be no "rainbow round about the throne of God." All the glory and splendour of the covenant of grace are but emanations of His transcendent excellency; and as the varied hues of Iris all beauteously and harmoniously blend into each other, so in Jesus Christ we see mercy and truth meeting together, and righteousness and peace embracing each other.

Whenever we behold the rainbow, we are reminded also of human sin and suffering. Ere the natural rainbow assumes a form, not only must the sun shine forth, but there must be, in an opposite part of the heavens, the watery vapour of a discharging cloud. Even so, in the gospel of reconciliation, had there been no dark

cloud of human sin and wretchedness, the glories of Divine grace had never been manifested to the children of men. But "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin had reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

The darker the cloud on which it is drawn, the more vivid and lovely do the colours of the rainbow appear. So, O Christian, "tossed with tempest, and not comforted," the darker the dispensations of God's providence appear, the sweeter and brighter are the beams of the gospel rainbow of peace. The heavier your afflictions, the more is it your privilege to experience the consolations of the everlasting covenant; so that, with regard to all God's dealings towards you, you can sing, with the psalmist,—"Clouds and darkness are round about Him," but "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne." Be this, then, thy prayer:—

"Almighty and most merciful Father, the true and faithful God, who keepest covenant and mercy with them that fear Thee and ob-

serve Thy commandments, enable me, I beseech Thee, to acknowledge Thee in all my ways, and, under the darkest and most trying dispensations of Thy providence, to rely with unshaken confidence on Thy paternal love and care. May I be ever mindful of Thy covenant, and receive continual help to enable me to fulfil its engagements, so that, whether living or dying, in time or through eternity, I may serve Thee, be Thine, and Thine only."

Triumphal arch, that fill'st the sky
When storms prepare to part,
I ask not proud philosophy
To teach me what thou art.

Still seem as to my childhood's sight
A midway station given,
For happy spirits to alight
Betwixt the earth and heaven.

Can all that optics teach unfold
Thy form to please me so
As when I dreamt of gems and gold
Hid in thy radiant bow?

When science from creation's face
  Enchantment's veil withdraws,
What lovely visions yield their place
  To cold material laws!

And yet, fair bow, no fabling dreams,
  But words of the Most High,
Have told why first thy robe of beams
  Was woven in the sky.

When o'er the green undeluged earth
  Heaven's covenant thou didst shine,
How came the world's gray fathers forth
  To watch thy sacred sign!

And when its yellow lustre smiled,
  O'er mountains yet untrod,
Each mother held aloft her child,
  To bless the bow of God.

Methinks thy jubilee to keep
  The first-made anthem rang
On earth delivered from the deep,
  And the first poet sang.

How glorious is thy girdle cast
  O'er mountain, tower, and town,
Or mirror'd in the ocean vast,
  A thousand fathoms down!

As fresh in yon horizon dark,
  As young thy beauties seem,
As when the eagle from the ark
  First sported in thy beam.

For, faithful to its sacred page,
  Heaven still rebuilds thy span,
Nor lets the type grow dim with age,
  That first spoke peace to man.

CAMPBELL.

Majestic symbol of thy Maker's might!
Girdle of beauty! coronal of light!
God's own blest hand-mark, mystic, sure, sublime,
Graven in glory to the end of time!

T. A. HOLLAND.

Christ's Friendship.

PROV. xviii. 24.

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

CANT. v. 16.

"This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

JOHN xiii. 1.

"Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

HEB. ii. 17, 18.

"Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted."

HEB. xiii. 8.

"Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever."

MATT. xii. 48-50.

"Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother."

There is a Friend, more tender, true,
  Than brother e'er can be;
Who, when all others bid adieu,
  Remains—the last to flee;
Who, be their pathway bright or dim,
Deserts not those who turn to Him.

The heart by Him sustain'd, though deep
  Its anguish, still can bear;
The soul He condescends to keep
  Shall never know despair;
In nature's weakness, sorrow's night,
God is its strength, its joy, its light.

He is the Friend who changeth not,
  In sickness, or in health,
Whether on earth our transient lot
  Be poverty or wealth;
In joy or grief, contempt or fame,
To all who seek Him, still the same.

Of human hearts He holds the key;
  Is friendship meet for ours?
Oh, be assured that none but He
  Unlocks its purest powers;
He can recall the lost, the dead,
Or give us dearer in their stead.

Of earthly friends, who finds them true,
  May boast a happy lot;
But happier still, life's journey through,
  Is He who needs them not;
A heavenly Friend—to know we need,
To feel we have—is joy indeed.

BARTON.

JOHN xv. 15.

"I have called you friends."

HOW amazing the condescension, that He who is the glory of all worlds—"the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person"—should call sinful worms of the dust His friends! Yet such is the endearing appellation which He applies to the poorest and meanest, and even the guiltiest and vilest, of those whom He came to save.

Not seldom does it happen, that while men profess to cherish for others a strong regard, they do not act towards them the part of friends—their conduct gives the lie to their profession. Not so is it, however, with the Son of God. His friendship is no mere empty name; on the contrary, we may rest assured, that He will *call* none friends *without treating* them as such. But, as deeds are more decisive evidence than words, we proceed to shew how He evinces Himself their Friend by His conduct towards them.

Now, we know that a true friend is one *to whom we can with confidence impart our secrets, and acquaint with all our plans.* We should look upon our thoughts to be as safe in his bosom, as in our own. He is not a true friend whom we could not so trust. It was a beautiful representation of true friendship, given by one of the heathen moralists, that "friendship is one soul in two bodies." And even such is the friendship of Jesus. He puts His Holy Spirit within us and makes us one with Himself. "Henceforth," He says, "I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." He unbosoms Himself unto us, and manifests Himself to us in another way than He does unto the world. "Behold," says He, "I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." On the part of Jesus, this confidential communion is carried on by the communications of His grace, and the manifestations of His love; while on the part of His friends it is maintained by the exercise of holy thoughts, and of heavenly

aspirations and desires, which find their way to His celestial throne, more certainly and swiftly than words or looks convey our thoughts to our friends on earth.

Those, indeed, who are strangers to this communion do sometimes characterise it as the dream of enthusiasm, or turn from it as mystery. But its reality is recognised and asserted in Holy Writ, in language the most unequivocal, and is attested by the experience of the saints in every age. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." And what Christian knows not that there is such a thing, and that the most refined and exquisite enjoyments which this world can afford are no more to be compared with it, than the pale light of the morning, faintly gleaming in the east, is to be compared with the glorious effulgence of the meridian sun. He has the witness within himself of the treasure he possesses,—a treasure which he values far beyond the highest blessings of earth or time, so that his language is—

"Let others stretch their arms like seas,
And grasp in all the shore;
Grant me the visits of Thy grace,
And I desire no more."

A true friend is one who *sympathises with us under all our sorrows and sufferings.* Sympathy is one of the most delightful exercises of friendship. True friends invariably make each other's case their own. Their hearts participate in each other's griefs and joys, and, like the strings of the Æolian harp, vibrate in unison, and simultaneously mingle their plaintive strains; while the storms of adversity, which drive all false-hearted and mere summer friends afar off, only draw them into closer and more affectionate union. "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." The adage is not less true than common — "A friend in need is a friend indeed." And such a friend is the blessed Jesus to all His followers. "In all our afflictions He is afflicted." He knows what strong temptations are, for He has felt the same. He has been in the lowest depths of sorrow, and can sympathise with those over whom all God's waves and billows seem passing. "For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Even while He was yet on earth, His tender sympathy was touchingly exemplified in various

circumstances of His history. It was proved at the grave of Lazarus; for there "Jesus wept." It was manifested when the destruction of the Holy City was foretold; for then He exclaimed, in tears, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!" It was evinced on that night in which He was to be betrayed; for then, laying aside all thoughts of His own unparalleled sorrows, He occupied Himself in alleviating the griefs of His disconsolate followers. Nay, it was gloriously illustrated on the cross itself; for there He interceded for His enemies, and compassionated His friends, as He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.

And now that He is enthroned in glory, and no longer experiences the sorrows of humanity, He is still the same compassionate and sympathising Friend. The change which has taken place in His condition has produced not the slightest alteration on His heart or character. The names of all His friends are indelibly engraven on His heart, and their best interests lie as near His affections as ever.

A true friend is one who will *rebuke as well as commend, and will find fault as well as sympathise.* This exercise of friendship, it is

true, may not always please; yet, when prudently conducted, it is always fitted to profit. "Faithful," says Solomon, "are the wounds of a friend." Hence, too, the psalmist prays,—"Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." This privilege—for privilege it most unquestionably is—have all the saints; for whom Jesus loves He rebukes and chastens, "with a view to their profit, and that they may be made partakers of His holiness." Thus dealt He with Simon Peter, whom He loved; and in what manner was that love displayed? By reproving him for his faults, by warning him of his danger, and by praying that his faith might not fail. And His dealings towards His friends are still the same. He will not "suffer sin upon" any one of them, but, with the faithfulness of a true friend, He will "visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes."

We have thus seen that Jesus admits His people into the most intimate and endearing communion with Himself, sympathises with them in all their afflictions, and sends them seasonable and salutary reproof. In these, and

many other particulars which might be mentioned, His friendship resembles, though, at the same time, it far excels, all human friendships. There are some qualities, however, which are peculiar to itself, and in which it shines forth with incomparable lustre.

Earthly friends, how sincere and disinterested soever, are not seldom *unable to help or relieve us.* There are griefs which no human sympathy can ever assuage; there are wounds in the heart which it is not in man to bind up; and there are many calamities, diseases, and misfortunes, over which our most loving and influential friends can only shed the sympathetic tear. But where all human friendship is unavailing, "there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother," unto whom all power in heaven and earth is given, and who is, therefore, able, as He is willing, to extend effectual relief. "Fear not," He says, "for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness."

Earthly friends *may deceive or desert us.* The bosom into which we emptied our secret sorrows may betray our confidence, and the love of

our chief friends may soon wax cold. By the tongue of the slanderer, or by some misapprehension in reference to our conduct, they may not only be separated from us, but converted into our bitterest enemies. Nay, such is the fickleness of human friendship, that, after it has survived throughout all the vicissitudes of years, and stood the shock of conflicting opinions, not seldom does it strangely and unaccountably decay; thus illustrating the truth of the poet's language, when he says—

"Alas! how light a cause may move
Dissension between hearts that love,
Hearts that the world in vain has tried,
And sorrow but more closely tied,
That stood the storm when waves were rough,
Yet, in a sunny hour, fall off,
Like ships that have gone down at sea,
When heaven was all tranquillity!
A something light as air—a look,
A word unkind, or wrongly taken—
Oh! love, that tempests never shook,
A breath—a touch like this has shaken."

Widely different from this, however, is the friendship of Jesus. He is a Friend who "loves

at all times;" and, if we adhere faithfully to Him, He hath promised that "He will never leave nor forsake us." No length of years, nor change of circumstances, can affect His love, in any other way than in evoking the appropriate expression of kindness. His affection, when once bestowed, is "without variableness or shadow of turning." "Who, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors. For we are persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

All human friendships are *sooner or later dissolved by the ruthless hand of death.* The parents who ceased not, while they lived, to love us as their own souls, are torn from our side, and laid low in the silent tomb. The lovely infant, whose playful innocence had awakened our fondest affections, is nipt, like a tender flower, in the bud, and buried in the cold earth. The

youth, to whom we looked forward as the comfort and support of old age—the brothers and sisters with whom we sported in childhood, and took sweet counsel in riper years—the wife, or the husband, who was the partner of our every joy, and the soother of our every care, may go down to the grave before us, and leave us to pursue our solitary way through life's barren wilderness, where we ourselves must at last lie down in oblivion, and crumble into kindred dust. But oh, it needs not that we attempt to depict the scenes of anguish produced by the breaking asunder of those cords that bind us most strongly to this world. Alas! how many go all the day sorrowful, and refuse to be comforted, because "lover and friend death hath put far from them, and their acquaintance into darkness." But amidst the havoc which the ruthless spoiler makes among the circle of our families and our friends, and under all the desolation which he spreads through our habitations and our hearts, what a consolation, what a joy, to know that there is *One Friend* whose love to us is as imperishable as His own immortality! That Friend is Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages, who is "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for

ever." Not only does He love His friends till death, but in death, and after death. His "mercy" towards them "endureth for ever." Oh, how consoling are these words, "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee!"

But time would fail us to expatiate on the matchless excellences of the Saviour's friendship; we would rather invite you, reader, seriously to inquire whether you have secured an interest in it. For determining this question, Jesus himself hath furnished a test of the surest kind—"Ye are my friends," says He, "if ye do whatsoever I command you." Without this, you can have no real love to Him; and what can it profit to call Him "Friend," if you do not the things which He hath said unto you?

"He that hath friends will shew himself friendly." Be it yours, then, to respond to Christ's friendship. Let love and gratitude constrain you to love Him in return for all His inestimable benefits. Beware of offending Him. When tempted to violate your tender obligations

to Him, let the pointed inquiry once put by Absalom to Hushai, be present to your mind, and applied to your conscience—"Is this thy kindness to thy friend?" Have no intercourse with His enemies, but keep close and faithful to Him at all times, and in all circumstances. Ahithophel dealt treacherously with David; beware of doing so with Christ. Publish His kindness, and tell unto others what a Friend you have found. Imitate it, and abound in works of faith and labours of love. Anticipate the period when you shall be called to celebrate it in endless hymns of praise; and let this be the earnest breathing of your soul:—

"O Lord, make me, I beseech Thee, to be numbered with the friends of Jesus, and give me grace whereby I may be enabled more faithfully to live as in His presence. May I feel that He is near, in health and in sickness, in affluence and in poverty, in life and in death. And though He may be rejected and despised by an ignorant and unbelieving world, let love and gratitude constrain me to love Him in return for His infinite grace and mercy, and may it be my constant aim and practice to be zealous for the

promotion of His glory, to recommend Him to others, and to devote myself entirely to His service."

When gathering clouds around I view,
And days are dark, and friends are few,
On Him I lean, who not in vain
Experienced every human pain;
He sees my wants, allays my fears,
And counts and treasures up my tears.

If aught should tempt my soul to stray
From heavenly wisdom's narrow way;
To fly the good I would pursue,
Or do the sin I would not do;
Still He who felt temptation's power,
Shall guard me in that dangerous hour.

If wounded love my bosom swell,
Deceived by those I prized too well;
He shall His pitying aid bestow,
Who felt on earth severer woe;
At once betray'd, denied, or fled,
By those who shared His daily bread.

If vexing thoughts within me rise,
And, sore dismay'd, my spirit dies,
Still He who once vouchsafed to bear
The sickening anguish of despair,
Shall sweetly soothe, shall gently dry,
The throbbing heart, the streaming eye.

When sorrowing o'er some stone I bend,
Which covers what was once a friend,
And from his voice, his hand, his smile,
Divides me for a little while;
Thou, Saviour, mark'st the tears I shed,
For Thou didst weep o'er Lazarus dead.

And oh, when I have safely pass'd
Through every conflict but the last;
Still, still unchanging, watch beside
My painful bed, for Thou hast died!
Then point to realms of cloudless day,
And wipe the latest tear away.

SIR ROBERT GRANT.

Poor, weak, and worthless, though I am,
I have a rich almighty Friend;
Jesus, the Saviour, is His name;
He freely loves, and without end.

He ransom'd me from hell with blood,
And by His power my foes controll'd;
He found me wandering far from God,
And brought me to His chosen fold.

He cheers my heart, my wants supplies,
And says that I shall shortly be
Enthroned with Him above the skies:
Oh, what a Friend is Christ to me!

NEWTON.

Walking with God.

1 Kings viii. 23.

"Lord God of Israel, there is no God like Thee, in heaven above, or on earth beneath, who keepest covenant and mercy with Thy servants who walk before Thee with all their hearts."

Ps. cxvi. 9.

"I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living."

Ps. cxix. 1–3.

"Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord. Blessed are they that keep His testimonies, and that seek Him with the whole heart. They also do no iniquity: they walk in His ways.

Isa. lvii. 15.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

2 Cor. vi. 16.

"And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Heb. xi. 5.

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

By faith in Christ I walk with God,
With heaven, my journey's end, in view;
Supported by His staff and rod,
My road is safe and pleasant too.

I travel through a desert wide,
Where many round me blindly stray;
But He vouchsafes to be my Guide,
And will not let me miss the way.

Though snares and dangers throng my path,
And earth and hell my course withstand,
I triumph over all by faith,
Guarded by His almighty hand.

The wilderness affords no food;
But God for my support prepares,
Provides me every needful good,
And frees my soul from wants and cares.

With Him sweet converse I maintain;
Great as He is, I dare be free;
I tell Him all my grief and pain,
And He reveals His love to me.

Some cordial from His Word He brings,
Whene'er my feeble spirit faints;
At once my soul revives and sings,
And yields no more to sad complaints.

I pity all that worldlings talk
Of pleasures that will quickly end;
Be this my choice, O Lord, to walk
With Thee, my Guide, my Guard, my Friend.

JOHN NEWTON.

GEN. v. 24.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him."

IT has frequently been remarked as an instructive circumstance, that, in the record of the antediluvian patriarchs, from which the above quotation is selected, by far the greater number of their names are passed over in silence. They are merely mentioned, without any account being given of their history, or encomium passed on their characters. The mournful monotony of the narrative is relieved, however, when we come to Enoch, upon whose memory the sacred historian has put a mark of peculiar distinction, which has made it precious to the Church of God in all ages. It is said that he "walked with God." How simple, yet how comprehensive and emphatic, is this intimation! Let us endeavour briefly to unfold its meaning.

It is evident that the expression here used *presupposes a state of friendship;* for, as the prophet Amos rightly asks, "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" In order to walk with God, therefore, it is essential that that hostility of heart to Him, which is the characteristic of all men in their unregenerate condition, be laid aside; and this can only be effected by faith in the blood of atonement. In every age, the way of reconciliation to our offended God has invariably been the same. "God was *in Christ,* reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

This description of the patriarch's character suggests that his heart was impressed with *an abiding sense of God's presence.* Like Moses, he "endured, as seeing Him who is invisible." A consciousness of the Divine presence, and a realising impression of the Divine inspection, not only deterred him from sin, but stimulated and animated him to do and to suffer all the will of God. Such a regard to Him, who is everywhere present, is fitted to produce a most salutary effect upon our whole walk and conversation. It was the advice of a heathen moralist

to his disciples, that, if they would act uniformly well and wisely, they should suppose themselves to be ever in the presence of Socrates, or of some other eminent sage; but to be constantly mindful, that the Omniscient Judge is ever present with us,—that His all-seeing eye is upon us,—that not only our external conduct, but even the inmost recesses of our hearts are open to His inspection,—that not a thought can pass through our minds, not a resolution can be adopted by our wills, not an emotion, either good or bad, can rise within our souls, but, lo! He knoweth it altogether,—must surely produce a far more powerful influence upon our conduct than the applause or censure of ten thousand worlds. But, alas! we are prone to forget God, and, consequently, we become an easy prey to temptation, and satisfy ourselves with the mere form of godliness. How different would be our whole deportment, if we were found walking with God, living under an habitual awe of His presence, and remembering that He is the Witness and the Judge of all our thoughts, words, and actions! The solemn truth, "Thou God seest me," would, even in our deepest solitude and retirement, fill us with

a salutary fear of offending Him, and, in the most effectual manner, banish every vain and sinful thought from our minds. It would preserve us from temptation and sin, and, particularly, from hypocrisy and insincerity in religion. It would infuse light and gladness into our souls in the midst of the thickest shades of adversity, encourage us under all our difficulties and struggles, and cheer and animate us even in the solemn hour of death. Be it ours, then, ever to think, and speak, and act, as those who know and feel, that they are continually in the presence and under the inspection of Him, "unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid."

But perhaps the principal thing intended to be conveyed in this description of Enoch's character is, that he *maintained holy and intimate fellowship with God.* He carried on a constant intercourse with Heaven. His "affection was set on things above." God was his Friend, whom he acquainted with all his troubles and fears, and trusted with all his concerns; and hence, we cannot doubt, he enjoyed many sweet seasons of communion and intercourse with the Father of spirits. Nor was this

high privilege peculiar to the patriarch; it is enjoyed, in a greater or less degree, by all believers in every age; and not seldom does Jehovah still come down to them, in His spiritual tenderness, as well as His spiritual majesty, and make Himself known, so that they say, "Did not our hearts burn within us, when He talked with us by the way?" Those, indeed, who "walk not with God," cannot be made to understand what this Divine communion is. To speak to them of walking in familiar and holy friendship with God, and of the blessedness of this sacred privilege, is, in their view, to utter language which they characterise as enthusiasm, fanaticism, and folly. But those who have "tasted that the Lord is gracious" *know* that there is such a thing, and that all the happiness which this world can yield is not, for a moment, to be compared with it. In their own experience, they have found that, even in this land of darkness and distance, there is a possibility of maintaining a hallowed intercourse and communion with the Most High, of which a stranger to close and intimate walking with Him can know absolutely nothing, and which is but the prelude and antepast of

that higher and more perfect communion, which the believer shall hereafter be permitted to enjoy, when He, who is always with him on earth, shall manifest Himself to him in fulness of joy.

"Here the world but little knows us,
Or our title to the skies;
We are but the wild enthusiasts
'Tis the fashion to despise;
But within our grateful bosoms
We a hidden treasure hold,
Which we would not give the worldling
For his glory or his gold."

The expression, "walking with God," denotes also, that Enoch *studied to please Him by obeying His commands.* The Divine law was the rule of his conduct, and his constant aim was to approve himself to Him with whom he walked. The manners of the period in which he lived were exceedingly corrupt; but, instead of joining the multitude in their ungodly deeds, he stood forth boldly as a reprover of vice, and an advocate for the cause of God. While the great mass of his contemporaries were "walking contrary to God," he bore a faithful testimony

against them, and zealously devoted his whole heart and life to the Divine glory. If *we* would walk with God, we must study to please Him in all that we do. Not only must we be reconciled to Him by faith in His Son, and be renewed after His image through the effectual operation of His Spirit, but we must conform to His will in all things. If, instead of this, we walk at large, and follow our own corrupt inclinations, we are but wandering away from God. It is in the path of duty, and there alone, that we can reasonably expect His presence. "The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you."

The conduct of Enoch was signally honoured by God. "He was not, for God took him." As explained by the apostle in his Epistle to the Hebrews, these remarkable words intimate, that God exempted Enoch from death, and took him to the full and perfect enjoyment of Himself.

Notwithstanding the greatly protracted lives of the other antediluvian patriarchs, it is recorded of them all, in their turn, that they died.

And when it is considered that death is, in its own nature, penal,—that it is the consequence of man's first act of disobedience against God,—the exemption which Enoch obtained from the general law of mortality, and his removal from the world without any of the pains, and woes, and distressing accompaniments of a sick-bed, and without the severe conflict which mankind encounter with the King of Terrors, must be viewed as a most signal instance of the Divine approbation. But not only was the sentence of death remitted to him; he was supernaturally translated, soul and body together, from his sphere of holy obedience on earth to the blessed enjoyment of God in heaven.

Christian reader, this event has been recorded not only to call forth your wonder and astonishment, but to animate and encourage you in your present course of walking humbly with your God. You have no warrant, indeed, for expecting a miraculous translation like that of Enoch. Just as surely as you now live, so surely shall you, sooner or later, die, and your body see corruption. Yet, if you but follow Enoch's footsteps, your departure from this

world will differ only in name from his, and you too, like him, shall, in an important sense, be translated. Your spirit shall immediately pass into glory; and though, for a season, your body must rest in the mansion of the grave, yet the time draws nigh when, "in your flesh, you shall see God." "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Let this, then, be the daily breathing of your soul:—

Oh for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame!
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoy'd!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove! return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made Thee mourn,
And drove Thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from Thy throne,
And worship only Thee!

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

WILLIAM COWPER.

Resignation.

Ps. xxxix. 9.

"I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because Thou didst it."

Job i. 21.

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."

Lam. iii. 33.

"For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men."

Luke xxii. 42.

"Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless, not my will, but Thine, be done."

Rom. v. 3–5.

"And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us."

1 Pet. v. 6.

"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

My God and Father, while I stray
Far from my home, on life's rough way,
Oh, teach me from my heart to say,
Thy will be done!

Though dark my path and sad my lot,
Let me be still and murmur not,
Or breathe the prayer divinely taught,
Thy will be done!

What though in lonely grief I sigh
For friends beloved, no longer nigh,
Submissive still would I reply,
Thy will be done!

Though Thou hast call'd me to resign
What most I prized, it ne'er was mine,
I have but yielded what was Thine;
Thy will be done!

Should grief or sickness waste away
My life in premature decay,
My Father! still I strive to say,
Thy will be done!

Let but my fainting heart be blest
With Thy sweet Spirit for its guest,
My God, to Thee I leave the rest;
Thy will be done!

Renew my will from day to day;
Blend it with Thine; and take away
All that now makes it hard to say,
Thy will be done!

Then, when on earth I breathe no more,
The prayer, oft mix'd with tears before,
I'll sing upon a happier shore,
Thy will be done!

CHARLOTTE ELLIOTT.

Ps. xlvi. 10.

"Be still, and know that I am God."

THE sublime hymn, from which these words are selected, is supposed by some to have been penned by David, under the apprehension of the warlike inroad of some mighty foe. But with respect to the time and occasion of its having been written, nothing certain is known. From the spirit of devout exultation which pervades it, we may, indeed, with more probability, suppose it to have been composed, upon occasion of the signal victories, which he achieved over the neighbouring nations, and the rest, which God had given him from his enemies round about. The firm confidence which it expresses in the power, providence, and gracious presence of Jehovah, has always been peculiarly encouraging to the hearts of God's believing people in seasons of trouble and distress. It is recorded

of Martin Luther, that, on receiving any discouraging tidings, relative to the great work of Reformation, in which he was so conspicuous an instrument, he was wont to cheer his friends, by inviting them to sing this noble song of victory. It is, indeed, a psalm adapted to every period of trial and alarm. After celebrating, in the most joyous and triumphant strains, the safety and stability of the Church, amidst all the tumults and commotions of the world, the peculiar privileges and immunities enjoyed by all her true members, and the desolation and overthrow of her wicked oppressors and persecutors, the sacred poet, in the name of the Almighty, adds this solemn and important mandate, "Be still, and know that I am God."

These words have doubtless a primary reference to those heathen nations who had been guilty of persecuting the Church and people of God, and who are here summoned, in view of those terrible judgments which had been inflicted upon them, to cease their fruitless endeavours to oppose the purposes of the Most High, and to acknowledge His sovereignty over all the kingdoms of the nations. They may, however, be regarded as applicable to the people

of God in every age, when exposed to the numerous vicissitudes and trials of this mortal state, and as intended to point out the disposition which, in such circumstances, it becomes them to cherish and exemplify. Viewed in this point of light, the words before us contain a gracious admonition, suited to the case of every child of trouble and sorrow.

When it is said, "Be still," it is obviously implied that those, who are addressed, are in a state of agitation and disquietude. How aptly does such a representation portray those tumultuous emotions and rebellious thoughts, that arise in the heart, when trials and afflictions overtake us in the journey of life! At such seasons, even those who truly "know God," and "put their trust in Him," are too often distracted by fears, and doubts, and distrust, which disturb the peace of the mind, and render it restless, impatient, and dissatisfied. But the duty, to which the afflicted Christian is here summoned, is to subdue those sinful risings of soul, and, with a peaceful composure and serenity, to resign every event to the superintendence and determination of God.

This resignation to the Divine will is a most

blessed attainment, and is unquestionably our most reasonable service; yet experience tells us that it is by no means easily acquired. It is true, that when our worldly affairs glide along in a smooth and easy course, and when we are favoured with health, and riches, with friends, and influence, and domestic comfort, and inward peace, we may find it an easy matter to be satisfied with the dispensations of providence; but when tribulation abounds, and swelling waters are ready to overwhelm; when our earthly prospects are blighted, and poverty as an armed man enters our dwellings, and seizes our substance; when disease and death look in at our windows, and mark for their prey those who are dear to us as our own souls; when friends prove perfidious, and they whom love and duty should have bound to us are turned against us; when grief and anguish rend our hearts, and all around is dark, and threatening, and tempestuous; then to look up in silent submission, and "to be still," "because the Lord hath done it;" to adore the footsteps of the Divine Majesty where we cannot clearly trace the designs of His counsel, and to commit our way to Him who is able to extricate us from

every difficulty, peril, and woe, this is indeed an elevation of soul most difficult to acquire.

It is, however, encouraging to reflect, that, "through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," it has often been attained, even by men "of like passions with ourselves." Need I remind you of the patriarch Job, who, notwithstanding his heavy and complicated trials, was yet enabled to say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord?" Thus also was it with Aaron, who, when his two sons Nadab and Abihu were consumed for offering strange fire before the Lord, is said to have "held his peace;" he uttered not a single word against what was done, but humbly submitted to the awful dispensation of the Almighty. The same entire acquiescence in the Divine will was exemplified by David, king of Israel, when, in consequence of the unnatural rebellion of his beloved son Absalom, he was forced to abandon his throne, and flee for refuge into the wilderness. On that most trying occasion, he desired Zadok, the priest, to carry back the ark of the covenant of God into Jerusalem, and, in the sublime language of firm faith, of unfeigned grief, and holy resignation, said, in the hearing

of his faithful followers, "If I shall find favour in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me again, and shew me both it and His habitation. But if He thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him." And to this exactly corresponds that noble example of submission exhibited by Eli, a distinguished priest of the Most High God, who, on the prophet Samuel announcing to him that God had determined to cut off his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, in the flower of their age, answered, "It is the Lord; let Him do what seemeth Him good." But our blessed Lord, "who was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin," hath left us a still brighter example of this calm and unmurmuring resignation to the will of Heaven. According as the prophet Isaiah had predicted concerning Him, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not His mouth." And in all ages of the gospel dispensation, many of the humblest and feeblest of His followers have, by His supporting grace, been enabled to meet with fortitude, and sustain with meekness,

numerous and long-continued trials, which were "grievous to flesh and blood."

This submission to the will of God is, however, very different from that stoical apathy and unconcern, which men of the world occasionally affect under suffering. Unless we truly feel affliction when it comes upon us, and allow it to go to our heart, it will never be a trial to us; and where there is no trial, there can neither be need for fortitude, nor room for submission. Accordingly, we find that even Christ himself had so exquisite a sense of suffering that He said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;" "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say, save me from this hour;" "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." We are not to suppose, then, that we are wanting in our submission to Heaven, if we feel our trials deeply, provided we put down all sinful repinings, and express the same reverential submission with our Lord, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." To be indifferent to suffering, or to make light of it, so far from being a duty, is a most heinous sin; it is a virtual refusing to bend under the hand of the Almighty—a "despising of the chastening of

the Lord." Against this stubborn and untameable temper, the children of God must carefully guard. They must "humble themselves under the mighty hand of God;" and it becomes them to "sit alone and keep silence, to put their mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope." But, whilst they are to beware of despising God's chastening, it is equally incumbent upon them to guard against falling into the other extreme of fainting when they are rebuked of Him. No pressure of affliction, however severe, and no continuance of it, however protracted, can exempt them from the obligation to the exercise of patience. As the children of their Father in heaven, they must endure chastisement with an humble and submissive spirit, drinking the bitter cup they would wish to avoid, without repining or murmuring against Him who administers it, and cheerfully acquiescing in whatever He is pleased to appoint.

Such is the calm tranquillity of soul to which we are here called. Surely it well becomes us earnestly and diligently to seek this heavenly temper. It will prove the surest antidote to all the multifarious ills of human life. When all other sources of relief are dried up, it will be

found a never-failing fountain of consolation to the weary and fainting spirit, even in the lowest depths of sorrow.

Let us now consider the *argument by which this disposition of mind is here enforced.*

We are summoned to "be still" on the ground that *He who afflicts us is God.* I am God; therefore, be thou still. Nothing ever happens by chance, or apart from His designs, for "He worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will." Afflictive dispensations are the result of His appointment and agency, for, though "man is born unto trouble as the sparks fly upward," yet "affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground." They "come down from above;" they come forth from Him who is "wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working." And this important principle, that our afflictions are the work of God, will be found to involve all that is fitted to quell the tumults and fears of the soul, and induce us to acquiesce in all the dispensations of providence with respect to our lot.

For when the Almighty comes forth to us, and says, "Know that I am God," the assertion

implies, that *He is the supreme and sovereign Disposer of all events.* This is not only clearly involved in the doctrine of His universal providence, but is taught in the most explicit terms which language can furnish. "See now that I, even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no god besides me. I form the light, and create the darkness; I make peace, and create evil. I, the Lord, do all these things." In the Book of Job it is declared, that "He giveth not account of His matters;" and to the same effect we find Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, when his understanding returned unto him, acknowledging that the Most High "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" His unquestionable right to do with us and to us as He sees fit, is founded on the property which He has in us as His creatures. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." We are the workmanship of His hand, and on Him we continually depend

for life, and health, and every blessing that gladdens our lot. We possess nothing, but what He has given us. We, and all that we have, are far more His property than our own. He, therefore, has an undoubted right either to give or to withhold, according to His pleasure. Who, then, is he that "replieth against God?" "We are the clay, and He is the potter." "As the clay is in the potter's hand, so are we in the hand of the Lord." How unreasonable and presumptuous, therefore, must be all repining, murmuring, and rebellion at the dispensations of the Almighty Creator. "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" "Shall the clay say to him who fashioned it, What makest thou? or the work to him who formed it, Thou hast no hands?" "Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake itself against them that lift it up, or as if the staff should lift up itself, as if it were no wood?" In affliction, we feel the touch of that mighty hand, which made us, and which can easily turn us to dust again. Surely, in these circumstances, it becomes us to bend with humility and resignation to the appoint-

ments of His sovereign pleasure, and listen to the voice which says unto us, "Be still, and know that I am God."

He who thus addresses us is *a God of infinite justice.* Our impatience under affliction generally springs from a secret belief, that we do not actually deserve what we suffer. This, though we may not acknowledge it, is too often the real cause of all our repinings and complaints. But need I remind you, that such a belief is a practical impeachment of the justice of Heaven, and that, so long as we continue to cherish it, we can never reasonably look for a removal, or a mitigation of our distresses? It is our duty to recollect, that, however sovereign are all God's acts towards us, in themselves they are all acts of the strictest righteousness and equity. "He is righteous in all His ways, and holy in all His works." "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" was the inquiry of Abraham. "Doth God pervert judgment? or doth the Almighty pervert justice?" was the challenge of Bildad. And numerous statements to the same effect will be found in the Word of God. "I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in

Thy sight; that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." "Just and true are Thy ways, Thou king of saints." "Thou art righteous, O Lord God Almighty, because Thou hast judged thus." "Clouds and darkness are round about Him; justice and judgment are the habitation of His throne." Such being the perfect equity of the Divine administration, we may feel assured, that, whatever innocence any of us may plead, we suffer no more than what our sins and our iniquities deserve. "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" is a most just and reasonable inquiry. At the best, we are but unprofitable servants. Even this is more than we are entitled to claim. For, if God were to enter into judgment with us, who could stand before Him? Only let us call to mind the violations of the Divine law, with which even the most inoffensive of us have been chargeable at every period of our lives; the ingratitude which we have so often shewn to God for His unceasing loving-kindness towards us; the little improvement which we have made of the precious talents which He has put into our hands; the frequency with which

we have provoked Him by our backslidings and grievous iniquities; and the inordinate attachment which we have, in innumerable instances, so fondly cherished, and so unblushingly manifested to the vanities, pomps, honours, and profits of this evil and transitory world; let us only think of these things, and we shall have abundant reason to say that, even in our heaviest trials, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities," otherwise He would, long ere now, have cut us down as cumberers of the ground, and consigned us to those dreary and terrific abodes, where the worm dieth not, and the fire cannot be quenched. "Surely," then, "it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more; that which I see not teach Thou me; if I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." Thus, in the perfect righteousness and justice of God, do we discover the strongest reason for unqualified submission to His will in seasons of tribulation and sorrow. Since all His providential dispensations are ordered by the most unerring rectitude, the voice of wisdom is, "Be still, and know that He is God."

As a further ground of submission, it may be remarked, that the Author of all our afflictions is a *Being of infinite wisdom.* "His understanding is infinite," He knows the end from the beginning, and can, therefore, judge with unerring skill, what are the best means for accomplishing His gracious plans. It is, however, "but a small part of His ways" that we can see at present, and, consequently, there are many things in the conduct of His providence which are apt to perplex and disturb our minds. "His way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters; and His footsteps are not known." In many cases, He says to us in the language of His providence, "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." How frequently are we ready to complain, that our lot is not so prosperous, nor our condition so comfortable as we could desire; and should we be visited with severe affliction, and especially, should our trials be numerous as well as severe, our minds are well-nigh overwhelmed, and, like the patriarch Jacob, we exclaim in the bitterness of our spirits, "All these things are against us." "But although thou sayest thou canst not see Him, yet judgment is before Him; therefore, trust

thou in Him." Those very afflictions, which we deplore, are working together for our truest and most permanent good. They are but the instruments which "the only wise God" employs to improve and ennoble our characters, to humble our pride, to shew us our weakness, to punish our sins, to wean us from earth, and make us meet for heaven. It has always been found, that the season of sorrow and distress is the most friendly to religion. Those noxious weeds, which so luxuriantly spring up within us during the sunshine of prosperity, require the hand of adversity to extirpate them; and the winds of affliction must blow upon us, in order to dissipate those pestilential vapours of pride, self-satisfaction, and vanity, which threaten to extinguish the sacred flame of piety in the soul. "When men take the timbrel and the harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ," they are too often inclined to "say unto God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of Thy ways. What is the Almighty that we should serve Him? But when they are holden in cords of affliction, then He sheweth them their work and their transgressions that they have exceeded. He openeth also their ear to discipline, and com-

mandeth that they return from iniquity." Such, then, being the unerring wisdom of that God, with whom we have to do, let us endeavour to avoid all fretting and repining under the pressure of our present trials and troubles, and trust everything that concerns us to Him, whose ways are past finding out, saying, with meek submission—"Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in Thy sight."

He who afflicts us is *a God of infinite power and compassion.* One great cause of that disquietude and restlessness, which arise within us in the season of affliction, is a distrust of the gracious omnipotence of God. We are sometimes apt to imagine, that the calamities and dangers, with which we are surrounded, are so formidable and complicated, that a release from them can never be expected, and, "wearied and faint in our minds," we conclude our condition to be desperate, and foolishly set limits to the workings of Him who is the Holy One of Israel. But it ought ever to be impressed upon our hearts, that the same hand which afflicts, is at once able and ready to send us suitable and seasonable relief. "With God all things are possible." "Hast thou not known, hast thou

not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" "He hath an arm that is full of power, strong is His hand, and high is His right hand." "He is the Lord God omnipotent," "the Lord Jehovah, in whom is everlasting strength." No danger, therefore, can threaten His people, from which His power cannot secure them, nor can any evil befall them, which He cannot remove or overrule for good. And His compassion is equal to His power; "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." His ear is ever open to their cry, and if He suffer them to be brought into perils, temptations, and difficulties, from which there appears no avenue of escape, it is not because He is indifferent to their welfare, but that His power in delivering them may be the more conspicuously and gloriously manifested. He first lays them low, and then He marvellously helps them. How frequently do we see in the history of the Church, and of individual believers, that "man's extremity is God's opportunity;" and that safety and enlargement come at the very crisis when things seemed utterly desperate! When the ocean is

lashed into fury, and the powerless vessel is driven resistlessly on, high over dashing waves, the mere plaything of the storm, He says to the raging waters, "Peace, be still." He suffers the floods to lift up their voice for a while, in order that the children of men may behold how much more mighty is the still small voice of His providence than the voice of many waters.

But a still higher motive for the exercise of resignation is to be found in the consideration, that He who afflicts us is a *God of infinite goodness and love.* When affliction presses heavily on the child of God, while the ungodly around him are at ease in their possessions, it not unfrequently happens, that he is ready to write bitter things against himself, and either despondingly to question his own interest in the Divine favour, or, through the malignant suggestions of Satan, to cherish hard thoughts of God. But, to those who have been exposed to this severe trial of their faith and patience, there should be no greater comfort than to reflect, that the Lord doth "not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men," and that the troubles of life, so far from being arbitrary evils, are the result of pure and comprehensive benevolence, and the means of posi-

tive good. In one sense, indeed, they are the consequences of guilt, for sin is the great source of all our woe; but it is equally true, that they are converted, by the scheme of redemption, into "means of grace." They constitute part of that fatherly discipline, by which the ends of God's moral government are fulfilled; and His grand design in sending them is, that "by the sadness of the countenance, the heart may be made better." They are therefore to be regarded, not as messengers of His avenging wrath, but as proofs and tokens of His paternal love and care. Accordingly, in Scripture, they are represented as the accomplishment of a gracious and fatherly promise. "If his children forsake My law, and walk not in My judgments; if they break My statutes, and keep not My commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail." The same truth is beautifully expressed by the apostle of the Gentiles, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, where he says, "Whom He loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God

dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby." Whatever then may be the number, the severity, or the duration of our trials, let us rest assured, that they are, all of them, administered in a spirit of parental kindness and love, that such discipline is essential to the welfare of our immortal souls, and that either here, or hereafter, we shall have reason to acknowledge with many who have gone before us, "It is good for us that we have been afflicted."

Such, then, is the argument by which the admonition before us is enforced. He who afflicts

us is the supreme and sovereign Disposer of all events, who has an undoubted right to do what seemeth Him good; He is a God of infinite justice, who afflicts us infinitely less than our iniquities deserve; He is a God of infinite wisdom, who can never mistake in judging what is best for us; He is a God of infinite power and compassion, who is at once able and ready to support and comfort us, in every time of trial; and He is a God of infinite goodness and love, who maketh all things work together for our spiritual and everlasting welfare. Influenced by such considerations as these, let us look up with reverence to the great Disposer of all events; and, under all the distresses with which He is pleased to visit us, let us humbly and calmly bow, while we hear Him say, "Be still, and know that I am God."

"O God, who art very pitiful and of tender mercy, and who dost not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men: dispose me in every season of distress to look up to Thee as a very present help. Grant that, as my sorrows abound, my consolations may much more abound. May I be still, and know that Thou art God, ac-

knowledging Thy right to do with me as Thou willest, and confiding in the wisdom and goodness of Thy dispensations. And as Thou knowest, O Lord, the weakness and frailty of my nature, vouchsafe unto me the constant assistance of Thy good Spirit, to enable me to continue in an humble, quiet, and dutiful submission to Thee, waiting for that peaceable and joyful repose in the eternal rest which Thou hast prepared for Thy people through Thy mercies in Christ Jesus."

It is the Lord—enthroned in light,
Whose claims are all divine,
Who has an undisputed right
To govern me and mine.

It is the Lord—should I distrust,
Or contradict His will?
Who cannot do but what is just,
And must be righteous still.

It is the Lord—who gives me all,
My wealth, my friends, my ease;
And of His bounties may recall
Whatever part He please.

It is the Lord—who can sustain
  Beneath the heaviest load,
From whom assistance I obtain
  To tread the thorny road.

It is the Lord—whose matchless skill
  Can from afflictions raise
Matter, eternity to fill
  With ever-growing praise.

It is the Lord—my cov'nant God;
  Thrice blessed be His name,
Whose gracious promise, seal'd with blood,
  Must ever be the same.

His cov'nant will my soul defend,
  Should nature's self expire,
And the great Judge of all descend
  In awful flames of fire.

And can my soul, with hopes like these,
  Be sullen or repine?
No, gracious God, take what Thou please,
  To Thee I *all* resign.

Thy way, not mine, O Lord,
However dark it be!
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it leads
Right onward to Thy rest.

I dare not choose my lot;
I would not, if I might;
Choose Thou for me, my God;
So shall I walk aright.

Take Thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill,
As best to Thee may seem;
Choose Thou my good and ill.

Choose Thou for me my friends,
My sickness or my health;
Choose Thou my cares for me,
My poverty or wealth.

Not mine, not mine the choice,
In things, or great or small;
Be Thou my guide, my strength,
My wisdom, and my all!

HORATIUS BONAR.

O Lord, my best desire fulfil,
And help me to resign
Life, health, and comfort to Thy will,
And make Thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink from Thy command,
Whose love forbids my fears,
Or tremble at the gracious hand
That wipes away my tears?

No, rather let me freely yield
What most I prize to Thee,
Who never hast a good withheld,
Or wilt withhold from me.

Thy favour, all my journey through,
Thou art engaged to grant;
What else I want, or think I do,
'Tis better still to want.

But ah! my inward spirit cries,
Still bind me to Thy sway!
Else the next cloud that veils the skies,
Drives all these thoughts away

WILLIAM COWPER.

Consolation.

Isa. xlix. 13.

"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord hath comforted His people, and will have mercy upon His afflicted."

Hosea ii. 14, 15.

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt."

2 Cor. i. 3-5.

"Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."

2 Thess. ii. 16, 17.

"Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work."

How oft have sin and Satan strove
To rend my soul from Thee, my God!
But everlasting is Thy love,
And Jesus seals it with His blood.

The oath and promise of the Lord
Join to confirm the wondrous grace;
Eternal power performs the word,
And fills all heaven with endless praise.

Amidst temptations sharp and long,
My soul to this dear refuge flies;
Hope is my anchor firm and strong,
While tempests blow and billows rise.

The Gospel bears my spirits up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope
In oaths, and promises, and blood.

WATTS.

HEB. vi. 18.

"That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a *strong consolation*, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

DURING their pilgrimage to Zion, the children of God are often "in heaviness, through manifold temptations." Exposed, in common with the rest of mankind, to those multitudinous "ills that flesh is heir to," they have various trials peculiar to themselves, and are frequently weighed down by anxieties and distresses, which the men of the world can neither know nor feel. Awakened to discern the infinite evil of sin, they can never cease to mourn for the trangressions of their unconverted state; the principle of indwelling sin still strives to regain its lost ascendancy, and causes them many a severe and painful struggle; not seldom are they wounded by the conscious-

ness of having acted inconsistently with their high and holy calling; and they tremble lest they should contract yet deeper guilt. Sometimes they feel the fiery darts of their great adversary, to which the shield of faith has not been steadily opposed; and if the light of their Heavenly Father's countenance be at any time withdrawn, they are almost ready to sink into the arms of despair. Besides the sorrows and anxieties concealed within their own bosoms, they are exposed to many outward troubles in their intercourse with an ungodly world. "The world is not their friend, nor the world's law." This was peculiarly exemplified in the case of those, whom the apostle more immediately addresses in the epistle before us. Like their Divine Master, they were "despised and rejected of men." Both their unbelieving countrymen and their heathen neighbours derided and persecuted them as the followers of a crucified Redeemer. Many of them "had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheep-skins and goat-skins; being destitute,

afflicted, tormented; (of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth." And though the sword of persecution has long been sheathed, and its baleful fires extinguished, yet the enmity of the world still manifests itself against the people of God. Even at the present day, they are exposed to the sneers and insults of the ungodly and profane, and, what is still worse, their characters are sometimes defamed and loaded with reproach. And while within they feel the assurance of conscious rectitude, and, in some humble degree, possess "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men," their motives are traduced, and their good evil-spoken of by a malignant and gainsaying generation.

But, under all afflictions, their Heavenly Father has graciously opened up to them numerous sources of support and consolation; and, in the darkest hours of sorrow, they have meat to eat, which the world knoweth not of. Whatever may be their outward sufferings and trials, they have an inward peace and joy in believing, and are soothed and composed by that calm sunshine of the soul which an approving con-

science can always bestow. Strong consolation, also, have they in the thought, that all their trials are but the ministers of the Divine mercy, and shall be followed by the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby, and that, through the dark cloud of ills that covers them, it is their privilege at all times to look up to a merciful and sympathising Redeemer, who has promised to make His "grace sufficient for them, and perfect His strength in their weakness."

It is important to observe, however, that the particular source of consolation to which the apostle here chiefly refers is "the hope" of eternal life "set before us," in the gospel. This is evident from the fact, that he speaks of that hope "entering into that within the veil, whither the Forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec."

Under all the troubles of life, such a hope presents to our minds the most cheering and consolatory thoughts. There is no exigency that can occur amid the toils and perils of life's sad and sorrowful pilgrimage—no kind of temptation, no form of trial, no peculiarity of con-

dition—in which we may not receive from it appropriate and abundant help and consolation.

Are we, for example, suffering under the pinching pangs of poverty, and is our life a continual struggle—one long rankling care? We may be comforted by the thought, that the time is coming, when we shall be replenished with the imperishable riches of heaven, where the sorrows and cares of this mortal state shall never more be suffered to intrude.

Are we falsely accused, and has the "envenomed tooth" of envy or slander inflicted upon our reputation a wound, which it baffles all earthly skill to heal or alleviate? It is our comfort to know, that the hour is on the wing, when the wicked shall cease from troubling, when the mouth of defamation shall be stopped, and when the Omniscient Judge of all shall make our innocence to shine forth as the light, and our righteousness as the noon-day.

Are we visited with pain and sickness, in our persons, or in our families? Let us take comfort from the thought, that in that blessed world which the gospel unfolds to our view, the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick," and "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow,

nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away." "The Lord Jesus shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body"—made free from every tendency to disorder, and invested in the robes of ever-blooming youth and beauty.

Have our hearts been wounded and agonised by parting from friends near and dear to us, who have been torn from our embrace by the ruthless hand of death? Let us not be disconsolate. In yonder world of joy, "the days of our mourning shall be ended;" for those who have parted here amidst the sorest grief, shall there meet again, to be separated no more for ever. Let us "not sorrow," then, as others, "who have no hope;" but "believing that Jesus died, and rose again," let us also believe, and be comforted with the belief, that "them, also, which sleep in Jesus, God will at length bring with Him."

When we anticipate our own dissolution, do we "shudder and shrink back appalled?" Do we tremble at the darkness and dreariness of the grave, and are our hearts filled with melancholy and sore forebodings, at the thought of

lying down in it, to be fed on by the worms, and to moulder away into dust? Let not our hearts be troubled. Death is not the end, but the commencement of life, and the grave is the road to immortality. Jesus "hath abolished death," deprived him of his dart, and paved the way to the mansions of glory, for all His faithful followers.

Above all, do we feel the power of indwelling sin? and do unholy desires and passions still rise, and rage, and hurry us on to wickedness? And do we exclaim, "Who shall deliver us from the body of this death?" Let us not be cast down. In heaven, "the spirits of just men" are "made perfect." There, they are presented faultless, a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but holy, and without blemish. Nothing shall exist there to excite sinful passions; nothing to awaken unhallowed desires. "There shall be nothing to hurt, or to offend, in all that holy mountain of God." "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."

What abundant reason, then, have we to take

comfort and consolation from that glorious gospel, which reveals the heavens to mortal view, and assures us of an immortal existence in glory beyond death and the grave.

"That field of promise! how it throws abroad
Its fragrance o'er the Christian's thorny road.
The saint, reposing on assured relief,
Feels himself happy amid all his grief;
Forgets his labours, as he toils along,
Weeps tears of joy, and bursts into a song."

It is with peculiar propriety, that the apostle describes the consolation thus arising from the hope of eternal life, as *strong*. It is a consolation which nothing can destroy; it is built on a foundation, which cannot be assailed by all the tempests of time, by all the fury of hell. And how frequently has its triumphant strength been demonstrated in the experience of those, who have been called to pass through trials, from which flesh and blood naturally shrink with dismay! Under its sustaining and invigorating influence, the prophet Habakkuk exclaims, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock

shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." David, too, on one occasion, describes the waves of adversity as beating fiercely against him, saying, "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy water-spouts, all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me;" but, when everything thus seemed to conspire to overwhelm and destroy him, he could yet exclaim, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God." And the apostle, in writing to the Corinthians, describes himself and his brethren as "troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in their body." Again, he says, "As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ." Nor are we to suppose, that the consolation enjoyed by these ancient servants of God, was confined to any particular age of the Church; it

has descended as the heir-loom, and as the sure portion of every one, who, by faith, "lays hold upon" the "promise of eternal life, which God, who cannot err, hath given us in Christ Jesus our Lord." It has sustained the captive in the prison-house, and the martyr at the stake; it has been felt under the pain of disease, and amid the privations of penury; it has imparted a resistless energy to the Christian combatant in his conflicts with the powers of sin; it has shed a softening and cheering light on the deepest gloom of bereavement; and by it the weakest and most timid followers of Christ, who, through fear of death, had, perhaps, been all their life-time subject to bondage, have been so fortified and animated in their last moments, that they have then appeared as more than conquerors, through Christ who hath loved them.

It only now remains to consider the *sure grounds on which the strong consolation of the believer rests*—"two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie."

The two things, to which the apostle here alludes, are the *promise* and the *oath* of God. These, he tells us, in the preceding context, constituted the ground of that consolation,

which Abraham, "the father of the faithful," enjoyed in the hour of his trial. When God gave him the promises, He was pleased at length to confirm them with an oath, shewing His irrevocable purpose of fulfilling them; and, as He could sware by no greater, He sware by Himself, and so pledged the honour of His great name and all His perfections, as the security of that engagement. Accordingly, Abraham patiently waited the Lord's time; and the promised blessings to him and his seed were at length vouchsafed.

Now, as God dealt with Abraham, so He deals with all His spiritual seed. To them, likewise, He hath not only promised, but sworn to give eternal life, and to bless them with all the benefits of the new covenant. Hear His own language—"I have made a covenant with My chosen; I have *sworn* unto David, My servant, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy throne to all generations." "This is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more go over the earth, so have I *sworn* that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee."

The reader cannot fail to perceive, therefore,

the sure ground of consolation, which all true believers in Christ possess. Even though they had nothing but God's promise, on which to rely, their eternal salvation would be infallibly secure. "He is not a man that He should lie, nor the son of man that He should repent: hath He said, and shall He not do it? hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good?" His promise has not been rashly or hastily formed, but is the result of His eternal purpose, and was given before the world began. It is founded on His eternal counsel, which is immutable; He never needs to change it, for never can any new or unexpected event arise to Him, who sees the end from the beginning. Among men, a promise is sometimes broken from want of inclination, or want of power to fulfil it; but the God of our salvation is infinitely willing to do all that He has promised, and infinitely able to accomplish all that He has willed. His justice and truth, as well as His mercy and love, are engaged to fulfil His promises. But to His promise, God has added His oath. He has pledged, as it were, His own Godhead, to bestow the blessings of redemption on all that believe. "An oath," when taken by men, "is to them an end of all

strife." The Lord, therefore, in condescension to the weakness of man, and his proneness to unbelief, and being "willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by *two* immutable things," that is, by His faithful promise, and inviolable oath, "we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

"Blessed Lord, who, according to Thine abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope, by the resurrection of Thy Son from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, grant that I may embrace, and ever hold fast this blessed hope, that, under all the trials, temptations, and sorrows of this mortal life, I may experience the strong consolation of those who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon it, and that it may be to me, as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."

The God of Abraham praise!
At whose supreme command,
From earth I rise, and seek the joys
At His right hand:
I all on earth forsake,
Its wisdom, fame, and power,
And Him my only portion make,
My Shield and Tower.

The God of Abraham praise!
Whose all-sufficient grace
Shall guide me all my happy days
In all my ways;
He calls a worm His friend!
He calls Himself my God!
And He shall save me to the end
Through Jesus' blood

He by Himself hath sworn,
I on His oath depend;
I shall, on eagles' wings upborne,
To Heaven ascend;
I shall behold His face,
I shall His power adore,
And sing the wonders of His grace
For evermore!

THOMAS OLIVERS.

Jerusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end?
Thy joys when shall I see?

O happy harbour of the saints!
O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow may be found,
No grief, no care, no toil.

Thy saints are crown'd with glory great;
They see God face to face;
They triumph still, they still rejoice,
Most happy is their case.

We that are here in banishment
Continually do moan,
We sigh, and sob, we weep, and wail,
Perpetually we groan.

Our sweet is mix'd with bitter gall,
Our pleasure is but pain,
Our joys scarce last the looking on,
Our sorrows still remain.

But there they live in such delight,
Such pleasure and such play,
As that to them a thousand years
Doth seem as yesterday.

Thy gardens and thy gallant walks
Continually are green,
There grow such sweet and pleasant flowers
As nowhere else is seen.

Quite through the streets, with silver sound,
The flood of life doth flow;
Upon whose banks on every side
The wood of life doth grow.

There trees for evermore bear fruit,
And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels sit,
And evermore do sing.

Jerusalem, my happy home,
Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end,
Thy joys that I might see.

ANON.

Refreshment.

Isa. xli. 17, 18.

"When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys: I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water."

Ps. xlvi. 4.

"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the Most High."

Zech. xiv. 8.

"And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the former sea, and half of them toward the hinder sea: in summer and in winter shall it be."

John iv. 13, 14.

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

Rev. xxii. 17.

"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Would I then, to soothe my sorrow,
And my pain a while forget,
From the world a comfort borrow,
I but sink the deeper yet;
She hath comforts that but grieve,
Joys that stinging memories leave,
Helpers that my heart are breaking,
Friends that do but mock its aching.

All the world can give is cheating,
Strengthless all, and merely naught;
Have I greatness? it is fleeting;
Have I riches? are they aught
But a heap of glittering earth?
Pleasure? Little is it worth
When it brings no joy or laughter,
That we shall not rue hereafter.

All delight, all consolation
Lies in Thee, Lord Jesus Christ;
Feed my soul with Thy salvation,
O Thou Bread of Life unpriced.
Blessed Light, within me glow,
Ere my heart breaks in its woe;
Oh refresh me and uphold me,
Jesus, come, let me behold Thee.

CATHERINE WINKWORTH.
(From Gerhardt.)

Isa. xxxii. 2.

"And a man shall be . . . . as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

IN speaking of the promised Messiah as a *man*, we are not to imagine, that the prophet was ignorant of His Divine nature; for he elsewhere describes Him, as *Emmanuel*, which, being interpreted, is, "God with us." It is the divinity of Christ, that stamps an infinite value on His atoning sacrifice, and gives to His redemption all its glory, dignity, and importance. Yet, had He not been truly and properly man, as well as God, He could not have suffered and died. Therefore it was, that He became "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," and in His human nature, marvellously sustained and strengthened by its union with the Divine, He endured the cross, and purchased redemption.

The mercies, which His people derive from

His blood and Spirit, are here represented by imagery, borrowed from the wide and sultry region of the Arabian desert, which lay contiguous to the Promised Land, and to which the sacred writers so frequently allude as the scene of Israel's wanderings. The figure is presented to our view of a pilgrim traversing that dreary solitude, where the way is painful and difficult, where little or no water is to be found, and where the scorching rays of a vertical sun beat upon his defenceless head. Overcome by fatigue and thirst, "his soul fainteth in him." In these most painful circumstances, how sweet to his ear the sound of waters murmuring near him, and how delightful to his eye the prospect of a lofty rock, under whose shade he may repose his wearied limbs, and screen himself from the noonday sun. With eagerness he hastens beneath the canopy of the rock, and having quenched his intense thirst in the cool limpid stream descending from its side, he rests till his spirits and his strength return, and he is enabled to prosecute his journey with renewed vigour and alacrity. Such, we may suppose, is the scene which the prophet intends to set before our minds, in order to convey to us some idea of the

rest and refreshment, enjoyed by those who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ, and obtained an interest in His great salvation. Such as the water and the rocky shade are to the exhausted pilgrim in the desert, Jesus is to His people, under all the difficulties and discouragements of the land of their pilgrimage. "He maketh them to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth them beside the still waters." Their course on earth is a journey through a cheerless and barren wilderness, amid the manifold fatigues and hardships of which their souls are ofttimes apt to faint within them. But when Jesus leads them from the contemplation of their own weakness and danger to a renewed discovery of His power and love; when He cheers them with a sense of His presence, and teaches them to lean on Him as the Beloved of their souls; when He lightens the burden of sorrow and trial under which they groan, and gives them strength to do the will of His heavenly Father; when He brightens and animates their hope of the glory that is yet to be revealed; in a word, when He revives and refreshes their hearts with the fruits and consolations of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter—then is He to them

as "rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land." He satisfies their thirsty souls, and revives their fainting spirits, and fills them with new strength and fresh alacrity for what yet remains of their heavenward course.

And how gladdening is the thought that this strong consolation is freely promised to all Christ's fainting people! For, listen to His own gracious promises: "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thine offspring; and they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear, I the God of Israel will not forsake them." "Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing; for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes." Reader, with such promises, there is surely

no room for despair. How heavy and long-continued soever may be your trials, you are encouraged to betake yourself to the refreshing stream of the Saviour's grace, and the reviving shadow of His love. But beware of seeking consolation where it never can be found — even in the broken cisterns of false comfort, of which this world is so full. No earthly source of gratification is capable of satisfying the longings of your immortal spirit. Together with every wish that is gratified, a new demand arises. "In the fulness of your sufficiency, you are in straits." The sense of want continually remains, like an unquenched thirst, an unfilled vacancy within. The world, with all its splendid ornaments, is a mere picture of felicity, and ever disappoints and deceives its votaries. Its fairest promises are no more to be trusted than the deceitful *mirage* in the desert. Like the weary pilgrim journeying on through its sandy plains, you imagine you behold a lake of water before you, but when with eager feet you hasten to the spot, you find that the sparkling sand has been mocking you with a deceitful show. You have been seeking living water in dry places which yield none; or if you do find water, alas! it is

bitter, as those of Marah, and no miraculous tree is growing near, which, as of old, may turn it into sweetness.

Amid all your pilgrim toils and sufferings, then, be it yours to "abide in Jesus," who alone can give you that living water which your soul desireth. Remember your constant need of comfort and support, and daily renew your application to Him, in whom all fulness dwells. And let your experience of all the rich and overflowing consolations, which He pours into your heart, lead you to rely with greater confidence upon His care, and make you so cleave to Him, that your whole life may become a life of faith on the Son of God, and that you may be stablished in every good word and work. So shall you be prepared for being led forth by a right way, until you come in peace to that better country, where the Lord "shall comfort His people, and have mercy upon His afflicted," where the cares and fatigues of the desert pathway, shall only be as the dreams of a winter night, where "they shall not hunger nor thirst, neither shall the heat nor the sun smite them. For He that hath mercy on them shall lead them; even by the springs of water He will

guide them." "For the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Let this, then, be your earnest prayer:—

"O God, my heavenly Father, who hast given me everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, be pleased to comfort my heart, and stablish me in every good word and work. Suffer me not to mistake the true nature and source of consolation, or to forsake Thee, the Fountain of living waters, for the unsatisfying and short-lived enjoyments of this world. May I continually receive out of my Redeemer's inexhaustible fulness supplies of grace and strength to refresh and invigorate my soul, so that I may fulfil my appointed course of duty with decision, fidelity, and perseverance; and may Thy presence go with me through the wilderness, to give me strength equal to my day, and to preserve me from falling."

And wilt Thou hear the fever'd heart
To Thee in silence cry?
And as th' inconstant wildfires dart
Out of the restless eye,
Wilt Thou forgive the wayward thought,
By kindly woes yet half untaught—
A Saviour's right, so dearly bought,
That Hope should never die?

Thou wilt; for many a languid prayer
Has reach'd Thee from the wild,
Since the lorn mother, wandering there,
Cast down her fainting child,
Then stole apart to weep and die,
Nor knew an Angel's form was nigh,
To shew soft waters gushing by,
And dewy shadows mild.

Thou wilt—for Thou art Israel's God,
And Thine unwearied arm
Is ready yet with Moses' rod,
The hidden rill to charm
Out of the dry unfathom'd deep
Of sands, that lie in lifeless sleep,
Save when the scorching whirlwinds heap
Their waves in rude alarm.

These moments of wild wrath are Thine—
Thine too the drearier hour,
When o'er th' horizon's silent line
Fond hopeless fancies cower,
And on the traveller's listless way
Rises and sets the unchanging day,
No cloud in heaven to slake its ray,
On earth no sheltering bower.

Thou wilt be there, and not forsake,
To turn the bitter pool
Into a bright and breezy lake,
The throbbing brow to cool;
Till left a while with Thee alone,
The wilful heart be fain to own
That He, by whom our bright hours shone,
Our darkness best may rule.

The scent of waters far away
Upon the breeze is flung;
The desert pelican to-day
Securely leaves her young;
Reproving thankless man, who fears
To journey on a few lone years,
While on the sand Thy step appears,
Thy crown in sight is hung.

Thou, who didst sit on Jacob's well,
The weary hour of noon,
The languid pulses Thou canst tell,
The nerveless spirit tune.
Thou from whose cross in anguish burst
The cry that own'd Thy dying thirst,
To Thee we turn, our Last and First,
Our Sun and soothing Moon.

From darkness, here, and dreariness,
We ask not full repose,
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not up Earth's dark glade
The gate of Heaven unclose?

KEBLE.

Daily Bread.

PROV. xxx. 7-9.

"Two things have I required of thee; deny me them not before I die: remove far from me vanity and lies: give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain."

PS. xxxvii. 3.

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed."

PS. civ. 14, 15.

"He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man: that He may bring forth food out of the earth; and wine that maketh glad the heart of man, and oil to make his face to shine, and bread which strengtheneth man's heart."

MATT. vi. 25, 26.

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

1 TIM. v. 8.

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

O King of earth, and air, and sea!
The hungry ravens cry to Thee;
To Thee the scaly tribes, that sweep
The bosom of the boundless deep;
To Thee the lions roaring call;
The common Father, kind to all:
Then grant Thy servants, Lord, we pray,
Our daily bread from day to day.

The fishes may for food complain,
The ravens spread their wings in vain,
The roaring lions lack and pine;
But, God, Thou carest still for Thine:
Thy boundless hand with food can bless
The bleak and lonely wilderness;
And Thou hast taught us, Lord, to pray
For daily bread from day to day.

And oh! when through the wilds we roam
That part us from our heavenly home;
When, lost in danger, want, and woe,
Our faithless tears begin to flow;
Do Thou the gracious comfort give,
By which alone the soul may live;
And grant Thy servants, Lord, we pray,
The bread of life from day to day!

BISHOP REGINALD HEBER.

MATT. vi. 11.

"Give us this day our daily bread."

THESE words direct us to make our temporal necessities the subject of prayer to God, and, inasmuch as those are the very concerns in which we are most apt to overlook the interposition of Heaven, it was peculiarly necessary to have this direction given us. We are thus reminded of the importance of acknowledging the agency of God in things of apparently inferior moment, and of realising the thought of an overruling providence in every event that befalls us. It is remarkable, however, that in the whole of our Lord's Prayer there is only one petition for temporal mercies, all the rest being petitions for spiritual and heavenly blessings. This circumstance is doubtless designed to teach us, that the latter are infinitely more important than the former, and

consequently we ought chiefly to seek the salvation and eternal happiness of our immortal souls.

The term *bread* here signifies whatever is necessary and suitable to our temporal support and comfort. So it is used in the promise of Jehovah concerning Zion, "I will satisfy her poor with bread;" and again, in the prayer of Agur, "Feed me with food convenient for me;" where the expression literally signifies bread, but is used in a more extensive sense, and implies all the necessaries and conveniences of life. For these, our Saviour teaches us, it is perfectly lawful and proper to pray. Religion does not require us either to neglect or despise the outward blessings of this life. Though inferior in their nature and value to spiritual blessings, yet, in their own place, they are necessary. Accordingly, our blessed Lord himself declares, "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye *have need* of these things." They are necessary for the continuance of our natural life, for the preservation of our health, and for the proper discharge of our various duties. We are, therefore, permitted and encouraged to request God by prayer and supplication, that He would supply our temporal need.

It is important to observe, that our praying for temporal mercies ought to be accompanied with certain conditions and limitations. And the first of these is, that we should *ask only those things which are necessary.* We are directed to pray, not for the superfluities of life, but simply for *bread,* that is, for those things which are requisite for our subsistence and comfort. If God, indeed, should see fit to give us riches, we should receive them out of His hand with thankfulness, and pray for grace to enable us to use them for His glory, and for the good of our fellow-men. But we are not to cherish any inordinate anxiety for more than "food convenient for us;" and far less are we to pray to God for more. "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content." Let us not conclude from this, however, that all desires after the increase of our worldly store are inconsistent with the Christian character. There is nothing wrong in those, who have their faces Zionward, endeavouring to make their passage through the wilderness of life easy and comfortable. What we are to guard against, is our so setting our hearts upon the things which are seen and temporal, as to be in danger of finally losing those things which are unseen and eternal.

This petition teaches us also to *avoid all undue anxiety and thoughtfulness for the future.* "Give us *this day* our *daily* bread." We are not to ask, that God would bestow upon us at once what may serve for our whole lives, and deliver us from all fear of want hereafter, but that He would give us day by day what is needful. "Casting all our care upon Him," we are to expect renewed expressions of His bounty every day of our lives, and to feel assured, that He will not withhold from us what is really necessary for our existence and comfort. Not that we are to banish from our minds all concern about the future, and to restrict our attention to the affairs of the day that is passing over our heads. The language of Scripture is in unison with the dictates of reason, that it is our duty, not only to provide for the supply of our present necessities, but to lay up in store what may be necessary to meet future exigencies, even as the ant provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest, so that, when winter arrives, she may not perish for want. But we are not to be unduly apprehensive respecting our future necessities. We are to "take no thought," that is, no excessive and distressing

thought "for the morrow." Such immoderate anxiety for the future indicates an undue attachment to the possessions of this world, and a sinful want of confidence in the Divine perfections and promises. It is not only injurious in its immediate effects, as rendering us fretful, discontented, and ungrateful, but its tendency is to withdraw our attention from Divine things. When we pray for more than our daily bread, we ask for that which God hath not promised to bestow, and which He has forbidden us to desire. As He has commanded us to pray to Him daily, we ought not to ask that to-day, which we as yet do not require, and which may be more properly prayed for to-morrow. The throne of grace is accessible to us every day of our lives; He who sits upon it is always able and ready to provide for us; and therefore it is both impious and ungrateful to doubt His future care for our good. Though new wants arise daily, new supplies will be daily provided. Moreover, those future wants which are apt to excite so many harassing cares and tormenting fears may never need to be supplied. "For what is our life? it is even as a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth

away." When we are saying to our soul, "Thou hast much goods laid up for many years," the voice of Him, with whom is the number of our months, may be heard declaring, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee."

Another limitation in this petition is, that our desires for temporal mercies should be *in subserviency to the welfare and happiness of our immortal souls.* We are directed to ask only those things that are necessary, not because the riches of the world, or the superfluities of life, may not lawfully be possessed or enjoyed, but because they might not be conducive to our spiritual interests. Did we receive them, we might be tempted to set our hearts upon them, to become avaricious and grasping, to be puffed up with pride, to forget God, and to oppress others. We should, therefore, leave the event entirely in the hand of God, who "knoweth our frame," and is well acquainted with what we are able to bear, and consequently sees what state of life will be most convenient for us. The kingdom of God and His righteousness should be our first and chief concern, and all other things should be sought for, only in so far as they are serviceable

to these. In our petitions for the good things of this life, we should be willing to have our wishes fulfilled or denied, according to the will of God, or only in so far as His infinite wisdom sees to be most conducive to our real and essential welfare. This is not only the doctrine of Scripture, but so consonant to reason, that we find even heathen philosophers expressing themselves to a similar effect. Thus Socrates is represented, as teaching his pupil Alcibiades, to "beseech the supreme God, to give him what was good for him, though he should not ask it, and to withhold from him whatever would be hurtful, though he should be so foolish as to pray for it."

In this petition we are reminded, that, *for the supply of their temporal necessities, men continually depend upon God.* When we pray, that God would give us our daily bread, we acknowledge, that all our earthly comforts are to be ascribed to His care and bounty, and our use and enjoyment of them to His blessing. But alas! how prone are we to forget the God, in whom we live, and move, and have our being! We are ready enough to admit, that spiritual blessings proceed from Him, and that consequently it is our duty to pray for them; but,

in regard to temporal mercies, we are apt to imagine, that they are entirely the fruits of our own industry, and may be expected even though we should not seek them from Heaven. The offering up of this petition, however, is a distinct recognition on our part, that those things, which are necessary for the body, flow just as directly and necessarily from our heavenly Father, as do the blessings imparted to the soul. Whatever we possess of any kind, is held of the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and depends entirely on His free pleasure; for what He has bestowed, He can, with equal ease, at any time, take away. The necessaries and comforts of life may appear to be the result only of our own exertions, or of the succour of our kind relatives and friends, yet these are but the instruments which our Almighty Parent is pleased to employ for our support. Whatever success may attend our secular enterprises or employments, is the result of His bounty; and to Him we owe both the ability and the will to earn our daily bread. It becomes us, then, to "seek our meat from Him," and to solicit, as pensioners upon His bounty, the continuance of our temporal mercies, saying, "Give us, O Lord, day by day, our daily bread."

Thus only can we expect that blessing with our temporal comforts, without which they will prove a curse. For, to all who withhold from Him the glory that is due unto His name, He declares, "I will curse your blessings; yea, I have cursed them already; because ye do not lay it to heart."

This petition does *not* imply, that *we should not labour to obtain our daily bread.* Our dependence on God for bodily subsistence and temporal comfort, in no degree relieves us from the obligation to exercise those powers, which our heavenly Father has given us for obtaining them. This is a duty, which we owe to ourselves, to society, and to God, and from which nothing can ever exempt us. It is true, that God is the giver of our daily bread, but we ourselves have a part to act in procuring it, and it is in vain to expect that He will provide it for us, if we are improvident ourselves, or that He will, by a particular interposition of His providence, supply the wants of the idle and the negligent. Habitual activity is essential to the welfare both of our bodily and mental constitution, and it is a law of Christianity, as well as of nature, that success in worldly matters is

to be attained only by active, diligent, and faithful service, in whatever relation of life we are placed, while, on the other hand, "the idle soul shall suffer hunger," and "drowsiness shall cover a man with rags." Accordingly, the spirit, as well as the express commands of the gospel, enforces and encourages habits of honest industry. "Seest thou a man diligent in business? He shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men." "The hand of the diligent maketh rich," and "shall bear rule." "Be not slothful in business." And again, "Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." It is clear, then, that man's dependence on God does not dispense with his own industry. To supine idleness, to a vain and presumptuous trust in Providence, while we neglect what is incumbent on us to perform, no countenance whatever is given in Scripture. On the contrary, it is expressly declared, that, "if any one will not work, neither should he eat." Besides, the circumstance that we ask God to give us our daily bread, is a tacit promise on our part, that we shall labour to obtain

it. We give the lie to this petition, if we use not our own efforts for the end we profess to seek. How inconsistent must it be to petition for what we do not endeavour to acquire. In short, our prayers and our efforts should always go together, and we should beforehand resolve to contribute our part to the success of that which we ask of God.

While this petition teaches us that we should use our own endeavours to acquire the good things of this life, it also reminds us, that it is incumbent on us to *seek these only by lawful means.* We are directed to pray for *our* daily bread, in order to teach us, to see what title we have to it—that it be our own, and not the bread of others. Besides, as we are to ask it of God, we cannot, without the grossest impiety and presumption, expect it in any method that is inconsistent with His will. It behoves us, therefore, to use no unlawful means of gaining it. We must neither be disingenuous in our dealings with our fellow-men, nor engage in any iniquitous employment, but honestly "work with our hands the thing which is good." For, as we cannot serve, so neither can we earn our bread of two masters. The "bread of violence and

deceit"—bread that is procured by rapine and injustice—is not the gift of a God of righteousness, and how successful soever wicked men may be in obtaining it, yet a day of fearful retribution is hastening apace. "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depth of hell." It is only when we make God's law the rule of our conduct, that we can expect His favour; and when we ask our daily bread from Him, we promise to earn it in a manner conformable to His law, not by stealing, or dealing falsely, or lying one to another, but by practising honesty between man and man, and doing unto others as we would that they should do unto us. And, although, in some few instances, it may be found, that the efforts of lawful industry are not crowned with that success, which they unquestionably merit, inasmuch as God, in His wisdom, may see it more conducive to men's spiritual interests, and to His own glory, to determine otherwise, yet experience and observation concur with Scripture in bearing testimony to the fact, that, even in this world, the common adage holds good, "Honesty is the best policy." "He

that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high, his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks; bread shall be given him; his waters shall be sure."

In this petition we are further taught, that since we ourselves apply to the bounty of our heavenly Father for our daily bread, it is a duty incumbent upon us to *supply, according to our ability, the wants of others, as well as our own.* We are not directed to say, "Give *me my* daily bread;" but "Give *us our* daily bread." We pray in behalf of our brethren as well as ourselves, and request, that both they and we, waiting upon God's providence from day to day in the use of lawful means, may enjoy a competent portion of the outward blessings of this life. And as it would be absurd to pray to God to supply our own daily-returning wants, without, at the same time, employing the means which are in our power, so it is no less absurd to pray for the temporal welfare of others, without assisting them according to our ability.

He that implores relief for himself should also feel pity for others; and, if he hopes to receive, should be willing, when he is able, to give. To offer up the prayer, "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread," and yet grudge to minister of our substance, and, it may be, of our abundance, to the helpless poor, is not less reprehensible and inconsistent than the conduct which is so expressly condemned by St James, when he says, —"If a brother, or sister, be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?"

The spirit which this petition breathes is one, which it becomes us to cherish, both as the creatures of God's hand, and as His adopted children in Christ Jesus. We should cast all our care upon Him, remembering that He careth for us, and that, as believers in Christ, who is the Heir of all things, we have a covenant-right to the good things of this life, which become to us, through Him, the earnests and the foretastes of the still richer communications of Divine goodness and grace in the better

country, even our Father's home. Thus relying upon God for the supply of our daily-recurring necessities, while we use the appointed means, we shall not only be preserved from perplexing anxiety and uneasy fears for futurity, but secure the greatest of all earthly blessings—a contented mind. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee; because he trusteth in Thee."

"O God, upon whom I continually depend for life, and breath, and all things, give me, I beseech Thee, that continual supply of Thy grace which may sustain and nourish my soul unto eternal life; and be Thou pleased also to provide for my body all those things which Thou seest fit for its support through this my earthly pilgrimage; and make me cheerfully rest on Thee for them, first seeking Thy kingdom and the righteousness thereof, and then not doubting but all these things shall be added unto me."

Oh how kindly hast Thou led me,
Heavenly Father, day by day!
Found my dwelling, clothed and fed me,
Furnish'd friends to cheer my way!
Didst Thou bless me, didst Thou chasten,
With Thy smile, or with Thy rod,
'Twas that still my step might hasten
Homeward, heavenward, to my God!

Oh how slowly have I often
Follow'd where Thy hand would draw!
How Thy kindness fail'd to soften,
How Thy chastening fail'd to awe!
Make me for thy rest more ready
As Thy path is longer trod;
Keep me in Thy friendship steady,
Till Thou call me home, my God!

THOMAS GRINFIELD.

Heavenly Father, to whose eye
Future things unfolded lie,
Through the desert where I stray
Let Thy counsels guide my way.

Lord, uphold me day by day;
Shed a light upon my way;
Guide me through perplexing snares;
Care for me in all my cares.

All I ask for is, enough;
Only, when the way is rough,
Let Thy rod and staff impart
Strength and courage to my heart.

Should Thy wisdom, Lord, decree
Trials long and sharp for me,
Pain or sorrow, care or shame,
Father, glorify Thy name!

Let me neither faint nor fear,
Feeling still that Thou art near,
In the course my Saviour trod,
Tending still to Thee, my God.

JOSIAH CONDER.

Shine on our souls, eternal God,
With rays of beauty shine!
Oh let Thy favour crown our days,
And all their round be Thine!

Did we not raise our hands to Thee,
Our hands might toil in vain;
Small joy success itself would give,
If Thou Thy love restrain.

With Thee let every week begin,
With Thee each day be spent;
For Thee each fleeting hour improved,
Since each by Thee is lent.

Thus cheer us through this desert road,
Till all our labours cease,
And Heaven refresh our weary souls
With everlasting peace!

PHILIP DODDRIDGE.

Progress.

JOB xvii. 9.

"The righteous also shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

ISA. xl. 31.

"But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

2 COR. iv. 16.

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day."

2 THESS. i. 3.

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."

PHIL. iii. 12.

"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

1 THESS. v. 23.

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly."

2 PET. iii. 18.

"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

PHIL. i. 9.

"And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment."

A soldier's course, from battles won
To new-commencing strife;
A pilgrim's, restless as the sun;
Behold the Christian's life!

Prepared the trumpet's call to greet,
Soldier of Jesus, stand!
Pilgrim of Christ, with ready feet
Await thy Lord's command.

The hosts of Satan pant for spoil;
How can thy warfare close?
Lonely, thou tread'st a foreign soil;
How canst thou hope repose?

Seek, soldier! pilgrim! seek thine home,
Reveal'd in sacred lore;
The land where pilgrims never roam,
Where soldiers war no more:

The land, where, (suns and moons unknown,
And night's alternate sway,)
Jehovah's ever-burning throne
Upholds *unbroken day:*

Where they who meet shall never part;
Where grace achieves its plan;
And God, uniting every heart,
Dwells face to face with man.

THOMAS GISBORNE.

PROV. iv. 18.

"The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

BETWEEN the light of the morning, and the life of the believer, many pleasing analogies obtain. The former is preceded by the darkness of midnight; so, too, the soul, before being illuminated by the Holy Spirit, is enveloped in dense spiritual gloom—ignorant of, and insensible to, the things of God, and the realities of a coming eternity. The light, which, in the beginning, shone out of darkness, was the effect of Almighty power; so, nothing short of a Divine agency can ever produce that light and life by which the believer is enabled to commence, and to prosecute his journey heavenward. It is of the nature of light to give colour to the plants, to enrich the fruits, and to ripen the productions of the earth, in their season; and, in like manner, the light of

the Sun of Righteousness imparts a heavenly complexion to the regenerated spirit, adorns it with the beauty of holiness, and nourishes, strengthens, and matures all its faculties and powers, till, like some fair tree, it towers aloft in strength and majesty, spreading abroad its branches, clothed with lovely foliage, and bearing much fruit.

The leading idea, however, suggested by the simile before us, is that of *steady and continuous progress.* Not all at once, but slowly and gradually, does the sun ascend the great arch of heaven. At first, we behold his light faintly gilding the horizon in the east; by degrees it becomes clearer and clearer; then the Orient orb himself displays the full effulgence of his beams, and mounts higher and higher, until at length he reaches the zenith, and shines forth gloriously and triumphantly in his noontide strength. Thus, also, is it with the believer. Faint and glimmering may be the first dawn of Divine grace in his soul, yet, gradually emerging from the gloom of unbelief and the depths of sin, he continues to gather fresh light and strength in his progress, until he arrives at that glorious world above, where he shall shine as

the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever. Not that his course is never interrupted. There may be seasons, when trials and difficulties retard his progress, and the shadows of doubt and uncertainty thicken about his path, yet, as notwithstanding intervening clouds, the sun certainly continues his upward course, till the splendours of noon-day intimate that the meridian has been gained, so does the believer go on from strength to strength, and from one degree of spiritual advancement unto another, until, at last, he is "presented faultless before the presence of God's glory with exceeding joy."

This idea of progress is implied in all the various comparisons, employed in Scripture, to illustrate the spiritual life. It is compared to *man's natural life*, in which there are first the helpless years of infancy, and the days of childhood and youth, during which the powers of the body and mind expand, before the vigour and strength of manhood arrive. Hence we read of "new-born babes," and "little children," of "young men," and "fathers" in Christ, and of "the stature of the perfect man." It is likened to *seed cast into the ground*, where it silently un-

folds its germ, and, springing up, brings forth "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." It is compared to *a grain of mustard seed*, which, though the least of all seeds, yet ultimately waxes into a lofty and umbrageous tree. Again, it is represented as *a race*, in which fresh progress is constantly and rapidly made, and which must be persevered in, if we would reach the goal, and win the prize.

Even such is the experience of every heaven-born soul. It is never satisfied with any attainments that it may have already made. The most advanced believer feels, and is ever ready to acknowledge, that he has not yet attained, neither is already perfect; and his great concern uniformly is, to press onward toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. And so, reader, will it be with you. Your religion, if *real*, will be also *progressive*. Your motto will be, "Upward and Onward;" and your past progress in the Divine life will be regarded by you, only as an incentive to renewed exertion, and the cultivation of a more ardent desire after an increased measure of spiritual prosperity.

Perfect holiness, indeed, is not attainable

here below; yet, not more certain is it, that the early dawn in the natural world is succeeded by the noontide splendours of the orb of day, than that the first dawnings of spiritual light will prove the harbingers of a *perfect day* of glory. Hence it is said of heaven, that "there shall be *no night* there." It is also styled "the inheritance of the saints *in light*." The night of death, as it implies no cessation of the essential powers and faculties of the soul, so neither does it interrupt the light and joy of those who "die in the Lord;" for they go from a land, where, at best, they see but "as through a glass, darkly," to that world, whose light and glory is the Lord, and where they see God "face to face," and "know, even as also they are known." There, they are for ever set free from all the sins, the sorrows, and the afflictions, which assailed them here on earth. All the mists of sin, of ignorance, and of unbelief, are completely and for ever dispersed. No unholy tempers, no wandering thoughts, no weariness in duty, no inclinations or temptations to sin are there experienced.

"Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame."

No more shall the saints be found, as now, "walking in darkness, having no light," but in the light of God's unveiled countenance shall they eternally rejoice. "Their sun shall no more go down, neither shall their moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be their everlasting light, and the days of their mourning shall be ended." Let this, then, reader, be your daily prayer:—

"Almighty and everlasting God, vouchsafe to give unto me an increase of faith, hope, and charity, and to purify my soul more and more, that, living in a growing conformity to Thy will, I may continually be preparing for the enjoyment of Thyself in glory everlasting."

The roseate hues of early dawn,
The brightness of the day,
The crimson of the sunset sky,
How fast they fade away!
Oh! for the pearly gates of heaven!
Oh! for the golden floor!
Oh! for the Sun of Righteousness,
That setteth never more!

The highest hopes we cherish here,
How fast they tire and faint!
How many a spot defiles the robe
That wraps an earthly saint!
Oh for a heart that never sins!
Oh for a soul wash'd white!
Oh for a voice to praise our King,
Nor weary day nor night!

Here faith is ours, and heavenly hope,
And grace to lead us higher;
But there are perfectness and peace
Beyond our best desire.
Oh, by Thy love and anguish, Lord!
Oh, by Thy life laid down!
Oh, that we fall not from Thy grace,
Nor cast away our crown!

CECIL FRANCES ALEXANDER.

Oh, may I daily, hourly strive
In heavenly grace to grow;
To Thee and to Thy glory live,
Dead else to all below;
Tread in the path my Saviour trod,
Though thorny, yet the path to God!

ANON.

Peace.

JOB xxii. 21.

"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee."

PS. xxix. 11.

"The Lord will give strength unto His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace."

PS. cxix. 165.

"Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them."

PROV. iii. 17.

"Wisdom's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

ISA. xxxii. 17.

"And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

JOHN xvi. 33.

"These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

ROM. v. 1.

"Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

ROM. xiv. 17.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

2 THESS. iii. 16.

"Now the God of peace Himself give you peace always by all means."

Peace was the song the angels sang
When Jesus sought this vale of tears;
And sweet their heavenly prelude rang,
To calm the wondering shepherds' fears.
War is the word that man hath spoke,
Convulsed with passions dark and dread;
And vengeance bound a lawless yoke
Even where the Gospel's banner spread.

Peace was the prayer the Saviour breathed
When from our world His steps withdrew;
The gift He to His friends bequeath'd,
With Calvary and the cross in view.
And ye, whose souls have felt His love,
Guard day and night this rich bequest;
The watchword of the host above—
The passport to their realm of rest.

L. H. SIGOURNEY.

JOHN xiv. 27.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

THERE are few of our Lord's sayings more full of comfort and encouragement for anxious, troubled, doubting souls than this, which He addressed to His disciples on the eve of His passion. In this troublous world, there is something ineffably soothing to the spirit in the very promise of *peace*. But it is not everything, which men call peace, that the Saviour of the world bequeathed as His dying blessing. Many, alas! are saying to themselves, "Peace, Peace," when there is no peace. There is a *spurious*, as well as a *genuine* peace. The benighted traveller may mistake for the light of some human abode promising shelter and rest, the *ignis fatuus* which lures him on, until he stumbles over the

steep precipice, or perishes amidst the deep waters of the wild morass. And even so there have, in every age, been multitudes of travellers in the night of life's toil, who have blindly followed the illusive phantom of false peace, until their feet stumbled on the dark mountains of endless ruin, and they sank into the awful abyss of everlasting shame and misery. Rest assured, reader, there is no true or solid peace, save that which is derived from Jesus Christ, and which is produced in the heart by the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit.

True peace arises from *a well-grounded assurance of reconciliation with God.* Our natural condition is one of alienation and rebellion against Him. None can deny this, without manifesting the most culpable ignorance of his own heart, and contradicting the testimony of the Holy Ghost, which plainly shews, that mankind are estranged from the womb, that they are alienated from the life of God, and that "the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Now, while such enmity continues, there cannot possibly be any real, lasting peace. The heavy curse of the Almighty rests upon

the sinner, and conscience embitters all his enjoyments. Sin, no doubt, may sometimes so harden the heart, that he may be unconscious of the want of peace; but when once the conscience is awakened and aroused, and he sees himself exposed to that "wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," then does his soul become like the troubled sea when it cannot rest. Racked with remorseful anguish for his past transgressions, he cannot think of the future without anxiety and dread; and just in proportion to the vividness and frequency of those impressions of a coming retribution that arise upon his soul, will be the degree of his mental perturbation.

When, however, by faith in the blood of atonement, he obtains a well-grounded assurance of reconciliation with God, all his dark forebodings are banished from his troubled heart. "Being justified by faith, he has peace with God," and is enabled to look up unto Him, as his Father and Friend. The storm of his fears is hushed, and he is now calm. A heavenly serenity is diffused through his soul. Jehovah's countenance no longer seems dark

and awful with the frowns of judgment, but is radiant with the smiles of redeeming love. The sword of Divine justice, which once gleamed vengeance on him, is sheathed, and, in its place, the sceptre of clemency is extended, and God bids him "go in peace, for his sins are forgiven him." This view of forgiving mercy not only abolishes the natural enmity of his carnal mind, but effectually quiets all those fears of guilt, with which his conscience was formerly so tumultuously agitated, and the blessed result is, that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keeps his heart and mind through Christ Jesus."

True peace arises also from the *renovation of the heart by the Holy Spirit.* A state of reconciliation is invariably connected with inward purity, as the blessed fruit of the Saviour's death; for holiness is an essential part of Christ's salvation. The renovation of the heart is essential to the enjoyment of peace. Happiness is inseparable from holiness, and cannot exist without it. All men, in their unregenerate condition, carry the elements of wild disturbance within their own bosoms. Their evil dispositions and ill-regulated passions are necessarily the sources of distress-

ing and painful agitation. It is just as impossible for them to enjoy internal quiet, as for the unhealthy to possess bodily ease. Such passions as rage, envy, pride, jealousy, revenge, ambition, avarice, continually exert a malignant and distracting influence on their minds, tearing them, as with a whirlwind, corroding them, like a cancer, and consuming them, like "rottenness in the bones." It must be admitted, that the restraints of law and education may do something to fetter, if not tame, these wild beasts within; but it is the gospel alone that can effectually subdue them, and restore the soul to harmony and peace. Under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the true Christian is not only delivered from the tumult of impetuous passion, but made the subject of those holy dispositions, which never fail to fill the soul with a thousand gentle and pleasing emotions. There is a happiness arising from the very temper and state of his mind. As there is pleasure in a state of bodily health, so the healthful condition of his soul affords a pleasing and peaceful satisfaction. The affections of his heart are fixed on their proper object, even on God, who is alone worthy of his supreme regard, and, consequently, he is

no longer restless and unhappy, but all is still and tranquil within him. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee."

It is important to observe, that the peace, which the dying Saviour bequeathed to His followers, is styled *His peace.* "*My* peace I give unto you." It is so designated, not only because He is its Author and Purchaser, but because the peace which He gives is *the same as that which He himself enjoyed.* Now, it is clear, that Christ's peace could not flow, as does that of the believer, from a sense of reconciliation with God; inasmuch as the love of the Father towards the Son had never suffered the slightest interruption. It must, therefore, have been that inward tranquillity, which resulted from the thorough harmony betwixt His will and the Divine, from His perfect acquiescence in every appointment of the Father, His unwavering confidence in His protection, and His undying assurance of His love. Such probably were the main elements of Christ's peace—a peace which He promises to bestow for the support and comfort of all, who, like Him, are doomed, through much tribulation, to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

This, like all His other gifts, He tells us, is very *different from those bestowed by the world on its favourites.* "Not as the world giveth, give I unto you." Christ's legacy is, in itself, infinitely superior to all the world's gifts. Its riches, honours, and pleasures, are not for a moment to be compared with the blessing of His peace—a peace which alone can satisfy the heart, and banish all disquiet; which partakes of the nature, and is a pledge and earnest of celestial blessedness; which is, so to speak, the very dawn of glory in the soul, and the beginning of that eternal "rest which remaineth to the people of God." Widely different, also, is the manner of its bestowment from that of the world's gifts. For, while the world gives selfishly, insincerely, and penuriously, Christ gives disinterestedly, sincerely, and generously. The world gives only for a season; its gifts, even when longest enjoyed, are in their own nature transient; we shall either be taken away from them, or they shall be taken from us; but Christ's gifts are "without repentance; His peace is assurance for ever;" His salvation an "everlasting salvation."

Christ's gift of peace is designed and fitted to

afford a sure antidote against all possible visitations of sorrow and suffering. Hence, He adds, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Having its seat in the soul, it is quite independent of all outward conditions. Nay, the heaviest trials that befall us, only confirm its exercise, and render its value more sensibly evident. "Calm and steady burns the guarded light of holy peace, even amid the gusts and storms of outward fortune. To many a troubled couch, the Spirit of God has come in visitations of unearthly peace. On the cheek wasted by disease, or on the pale and pain-contracted brow, has not seldom been witnessed the calmness of a heavenly rest; and from lips quivering with anguish have fallen words of meek resignation, and even joyful hope, that told how the peace of the spirit can triumph over outward pain."

The peace, which thus stands proof against the various visitations of earthly trial and trouble, is the sole, exclusive privilege of the believer. Every other kind of peace is delusive —this alone is genuine. No system of philosophy, how refined and exalted soever, can afford an adequate support to the soul, amid the

stormy waves of earthly sorrow. The true Christian alone can "suffer and be strong." In times of darkness and trial, worldly men may, indeed, maintain a calm composed exterior; but, could we only draw aside the veil, which covers from all but the eye of the Omniscient, the real state of their hearts, too frequently would it be discovered, that within there was either the darkness of cold despair, or a hurricane of agonized passions. But the believer has confidence in God's goodness, and knows that in Him he has an almighty Friend, able and willing to help, and who has graciously promised, that "all things," whether prosperous or adverse, "shall work together for good to them that love God, and are the called according to His purpose." In the darkest hour of sorrow, therefore, he is convinced, that all his trials are appointed by his Father in heaven; that how grievous soever they may seem, they shall yet be followed by "the peaceable fruits of righteousness;" and that these "light afflictions, which are but for a moment, are working out for him a far more exceeding, even an eternal weight of glory." Such is the faith, that cheers and supports all Christ's followers, when the waves and billows of afflic-

tion are passing over them; and, under the influence of this mighty principle, they may well go forth to meet the shadowy future, without fear, and with a tranquil, trusting heart; because they know, that their Divine Master walketh upon the waters, stilling the tempest, and steering their frail and helpless bark, according to His infinite love and wisdom, and that, ere long, He will bring them unto the haven where they would be, and anchor them safely on the shores of the heavenly Canaan.

Reader, if, by faith in the Redeemer, you have appropriated to yourself this peace, be it yours to maintain and guard it, as your most precious treasure; seek to realise a more lively experience of it, by walking more closely with your God and Saviour, and by giving yourself up more unreservedly to His service. So shall your "peace increase like a river;" and when at last the Prince of Peace shall the second time appear, He will introduce you into that land of rest, where your peace and happiness shall be perfect, without the least mixture of trouble or affliction, and never be interrupted, world without end. Let this, then, be your earnest prayer:—

"O Lord, who art the God of peace, give me Thy peace always by all means, and comfort my heart with the hopes thereof. Cause me to hear the voice of joy and gladness, and revive me with the assurance of Thy love. May I be filled with all joy and peace in believing; and let the sense of Thy mercies, O my God, encourage my repentance, and support me in Thy fear, until I come at length to enjoy Thine eternal favour, and my peace shall be perfected for ever."

The world can neither give nor take,
Nor can they comprehend
The peace of God, which Christ has bought,
The peace which knows no end.

The burning bush was not consumed
Whilst God remainèd there;
The Three, when Jesus made the Fourth,
Found fire as soft as air.

God's furnace doth in Zion stand;
But Zion's God sits by,
As the refiner views his gold
With an observant eye.

His thoughts are high, His love is wise,
His wounds a cure intend;
And, though He does not always smile,
He loves unto the end.

Cento by SELINA, Countess of Huntingdon,
(*From John Mason.*)

There is a pure and tranquil wave,
That rolls around the throne of love,
Whose waters gladden as they lave
The peaceful shores above.

While streams, which on that tide depend
Steal from those heavenly shores away,
And on this desert world descend
O'er weary lands to stray.

The pilgrim faint, and nigh to sink
Beneath his load of earthly woe,
Refresh'd beside their verdant brink,
Rejoices in their flow.

There, O my soul, do thou repair,
And hover o'er the hallow'd spring,
To drink the crystal wave, and there
To lave thy wearied wing!

There droop that wing, when far it flies
From human care, and toil, and strife,
And feed by those still streams, that rise
Beneath the Tree of Life.

WILLIAM BALL.

The Joyful Sound.

LEV. XXV. 8, 9.

"And thou shalt number seven sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the jubilee to sound, on the tenth day of the seventh month; in the day of atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land."

PS. CXXX. 7, 8.

"Let Israel hope in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities."

ISA. XLIX. 9.

"That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves."

ISA. XXVII. 13.

"And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem."

LUKE IV. 18, 19.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

Blow ye the trumpet, blow,
The gladly solemn sound;
Let all the nations know,
To earth's remotest bound:
The year of Jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransom'd sinners, home.

Jesus, our great High Priest,
Hath full atonement made;
Ye weary spirits, rest;
Ye mournful souls, be glad:
The year of Jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransom'd spirits, home.

Ye slaves of sin and hell,
Your liberty receive;
And safe in Jesus dwell,
And blest in Jesus live:
The year of Jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransom'd spirits, home.

Ye, who have sold for naught
Your heritage above,
Shall have it back unbought,
The gift of Jesus' love:
The year of Jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransom'd spirits, home.

The Gospel Trumpet hear,
The news of heavenly grace;
And, saved from earth, appear
Before your Saviour's face:
The year of Jubilee is come;
Return, ye ransom'd spirits, home.

CHARLES WESLEY.

Ps. lxxxix. 15.

"Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound."

THERE is here an obvious and beautiful allusion to the blowing of the silver trumpets by the sons of Aaron at the commencement of the year of Jubilee. That remarkable institution was observed, according to Divine appointment, every fiftieth year, and produced an extraordinary change in the affairs of the Hebrew commonwealth. It was emphatically a year of *release;* for not only was there then an entire cessation from all servile labour, as on the seventh, or sabbatical year, but all debtors were released from their obligations, captives and prisoners were set at liberty, and inheritances, which had been alienated, reverted to their original proprietors. In short, it was a season of rest, and joy, and gladness, throughout the land of Israel.

This ceremonial observance, like all the other institutions of the Mosaic economy, has indeed long since been abrogated; but the sound of the silver trumpets, with which the year of Jubilee was wont to be ushered in, may be regarded as emblematic of the gospel message, which proclaims "the acceptable year of the Lord," and brings to mankind "good tidings of great joy."

The gospel is a joyful sound, because it proclaims *pardon to the guilty.* As in the year of Jubilee, the insolvent debtor was delivered from his creditor, so, in this "the year of God's redeemed" we are set free from the guilt of those sins, in consequence of which we stand indebted to Divine justice. These are debts which all, without exception, have contracted, but which, alas! none can of himself discharge; for neither by obedience, nor by suffering, can we make atonement for sin. We cannot do so by *obedience,* because God has at all times a right to our services; and, therefore, we cannot discharge by future obedience, even were that absolutely perfect, what is due to past transgressions, any more than our avoiding to run into a new debt absolves us from one formerly contracted. Nor can we do so by *suffering,* be-

cause sin, being an infinite evil, is deserving of an infinite punishment; and, therefore, those, who suffer for ever in hell, can never say that the debt is cancelled.

But, whilst our natural condition is that of insolvent debtors, amenable to Divine justice, the note sent forth from the gospel trumpet is, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Such is the proclamation of heavenly mercy, addressed even to the most guilty and unworthy; for, though our debt should exceed "ten thousand talents," our offended Sovereign is willing freely to forgive us all, saying unto us, "Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." And this forgiveness is not only full and free, but complete and irrevocable. In the case of all to whom it is extended, the imputation of guilt immediately ceases, and the sentence of condemnation is for ever annulled. For "who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?"—"There is now no condemnation

to them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

The gospel message proclaims also *release from spiritual bondage.* All men, in their unregenerate condition, are the slaves of sin and Satan, and yield to their requirements. It is true, that they may be unconscious of their yoke, and, instead of striving to throw off, they may hug the chains that bind them; but their bondage is not, on that account, the less real, nor their condition the less degraded and miserable. Pitiable, indeed, must have been the servitude from which the year of Jubilee brought release to the Jewish slave. But infinitely more dismal and humiliating is the vassalage of sin. The mind, which should be the seat of liberty, is enthralled; and how great must be that bondage! The lusts of the unrenewed heart are strong as iron bands, merciless as the most unfeeling taskmasters; and the drudgery they entail is the vilest and most profitless that can be conceived. "The wages of sin is death."

But the gospel trumpet "proclaims liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." It tells the sinner of an Almighty Redeemer, who, at the price of His

own blood, hath purchased his emancipation from spiritual bondage. No sooner, therefore, does he welcome this joyful sound of "the acceptable year of the Lord," than the spirit of liberty is communicated to him, whereby the chains of darkness are removed from his understanding, and the fetters of corrupt lust from his heart. Thus is he set free to enter on the service of God—a service which is health to his soul, and joy to his heart.

The gospel message further proclaims the *reversion of our alienated inheritance.* As at the year of Jubilee, the Israelites entered again upon the mortgaged inheritance of their fathers, so all, who believe God's holy gospel, are restored to the inheritance of His love, and raised to the lively hope of "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." These inestimable blessings, we had lost by sin, and sold for our own transgressions. Like reckless prodigals, we had thus squandered away the rich patrimony given us by our heavenly Father; and so hopeless was our spiritual poverty, that, if left to ourselves, we could never have retrieved our fortunes.

Such, however, was "the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich." Not merely hath He rescued us from the lowest depths of destitution and wretchedness, but He hath placed us in a state of spiritual affluence, so that we "have all and abound."—"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of Divine grace." He hath made us "rich towards God," and obtained for us a title to all the rights and privileges of His children. He hath given us the earnest of His Holy Spirit; and when at length the last trumpet shall sound the Jubilee of the resurrection,—"the redemption of the body,"—He will put us in final and eternal "possession of the purchased inheritance, to the praise of His glory."

Thus does the joyful sound of the gospel proclaim to the human race far more precious privileges and immunities, than were announced to God's ancient people by the trumpet of Jubilee.

How great, then, must be the blessedness of those, who truly know this joyful sound! "They shall walk, O Lord, in the light of Thy

countenance. In Thy name shall they rejoice all the day, and in Thy righteousness shall they be exalted." It is quite possible, indeed, that the gospel may be heard and understood by many, who, notwithstanding, are strangers to the joy and gladness, which it is designed and fitted to impart. Such persons, however, do not truly *know* it; they have no *saving, experimental acquaintance* with its precious truths, and, therefore, it can convey to their souls no emotions of gladness.

Reader, if you really know the joyful sound of the gospel, you can doubtless testify, that, in believing, there is a peace that passeth understanding, and a joy that is unspeakable. Go forward, then, rejoicing in the name of your God; continue in the things which you have seen and heard, and the God of peace will go with you. Even now, He will mark you for His own, by adoption and grace; even now, He will guide you by His infinite wisdom, and cheer you by His heavenly consolations; and hereafter, He will bring you to the full enjoyment of Himself, in His everlasting kingdom of glory and felicity. Let this, then, be your prayer:—

"O most merciful God, who hast favoured me with the joyful sound of the gospel, enable me, I beseech Thee, to understand, believe, and obey it. May it come to me, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. Unto Thee only would I look for deliverance; for there is none who can help me, but only Thou, O Lord. Grant unto me the forgiveness of my sins; free me from the bondage of iniquity; and restore me to Thy favour and image, and to the inheritance which I have lost. Make me, who by nature am a child of wrath, an heir of God, a joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Enable me to rejoice in Thee, and in the good which Thou hast laid up in store for me. And when my Redeemer shall the second time appear, may I experience the *full* blessedness of the people that know the joyful sound."

The bondsman rejoiced when the Jubilee came,
And the glad sound of liberty rang through the land;
The captive rejoiced, for he knew he could claim
The rights which the free and the noble demand.

What rebel, condemn'd by his sovereign to die,
Unheeding, the tidings of pardon can learn?
Ah! beams not with gladness the prodigal's eye,
When a kind father meets him, and hails his return?

Rejoice then, O Christian! more urgent by far
Is the call of thy Saviour on thee to rejoice;
Let faith, while she gazes on Bethlehem's Star,
In praise everlasting lift loudly her voice.

Rejoice! for the trumpet of Jubilee sounds,
The day of salvation has dawn'd on our world;
True, sin has abounded, but grace *more* abounds,
Messiah the banner of peace has unfurl'd.

Rejoice! for thou 'rt stranger and alien no more;
Thy home is in heaven—thy Father is there;
Rejoice! for the terrors that scared thee before,
Removed by thy Saviour, no longer shall scare.

Rejoice! for the bondage of Satan is o'er;
The fetters that gall'd thee asunder are riven;
Rejoice! for thy foot is on liberty's shore,
Redeem'd by Messiah—a freedman of heaven.

Rejoice! for the Lord is thy surety—thy guide;
Thy fears shall evanish—thy faith shall increase;
No arrows shall harm thee—no evil betide;
Thy heart shall be comfort—thy spirit be peace.

Rejoice then, dear brother! rejoice evermore!
United to Jesus, what prospects arise!
Salvation is thine—and, when life's dream is o'er,
In glory thy spirit shall soar to the skies.

WILLIAM W. DUNCAN.

Blest are the souls that hear and know
The gospel's joyful sound;
Peace shall attend their path below,
And light their steps surround.

This gospel bears their spirits up,
They know their Saviour's name!
His righteousness exalts their hope,
Nor Satan dares condemn.

The Lord, their glory and defence,
Strength and salvation gives;
Israel, thy King for ever reigns,
Thy God for ever lives.

ISAAC WATTS.

The Living Redeemer.

ISA. xliv. 6.

"Thus saith the Lord the King of Israel, and His Redeemer the Lord of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God."

JOHN v. 25, 26.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself."

PS. xvii. 15.

"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness."

MATT. v. 8.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

1 COR. xiii. 12.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known."

REV. i. 7.

"Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him."

REV. i. 17, 18.

"And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

Jesus, my Redeemer, lives,
  Christ, my trust, is dead no more;
In the strength this knowledge gives
  Shall not all my fears be o'er,
Though the night of death be fraught
Still with many an anxious thought?

Jesus, my Redeemer, lives,
  And His life I once shall see;
Bright the hope this promise gives,
  Where He is I too shall be.
Shall I fear then? Can the Head
Rise and leave the members dead?

Close to Him my soul is bound
  In the bonds of Hope enclasp'd;
Faith's strong hand this hold hath found,
  And the rock hath firmly grasp'd;
And no ban of death can part
From our Lord the trusting heart.

I shall see Him with these eyes,
  Him whom I shall surely know;
Not another shall I rise,
  With His love this heart shall glow;
Only there shall disappear
Weakness in and round me here.

Ye who suffer, sigh, and moan,
  Fresh and glorious there shall reign;
Earthly here the seed is sown,
  Heavenly it shall rise again;
Natural here the death we die,
Spiritual our life on high.

CATHERINE WINKWORTH.

(*From Louisa Henrietta, Electress of Brandenburgh.*)

Job xix. 25, 26.

"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."

THOUGH worn down by pain, oppressed by sorrow, and harassed by the injurious suspicions and false accusations of his friends, the patriarch Job found hope to his soul in the contemplation of that Grand Deliverer, whose appearance on earth he so confidently expected. With the most touching pathos, he had been lamenting his friendless and desolate condition; but no sooner does he turn his eye to so animating a prospect, than he seems to lose all sense of his present sufferings, and launches forth into a strain of triumphant joy. "Oh that my words were now written!" he exclaims; "Oh that they were printed in a book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever." The words to

which he refers, are those which form the title of the present chapter, and which, in accordance with his earnestly-expressed desire, have been engrossed in the imperishable record of Divine revelation.

Much ingenuity has been displayed by a certain class of biblical expositors, in attempting to prove, that the words of the patriarch only express his assured hope of a temporal deliverance from his present heavy and complicated trials, and a restitution to his former prosperous condition. Such an interpretation, however, we cannot but regard as diametrically opposed to the intrinsic scope and bearings of the entire passage. It is altogether unsuited to the magnificent introduction, with which the words in question are ushered in, while the words themselves would be exceedingly forced and unnatural, if understood as denoting a mere temporal deliverance. Moreover, the patriarch had no expectation whatever of his return to a prosperous condition. On the contrary, he had shortly before declared, that his "way was fenced up," and his hope "removed like a tree;" and we find him, at a subsequent period of his history, expressing his despair of any comfort in

this life. It is clear, therefore, that the common is the just opinion, which regards this celebrated confession of Job as applicable to the promised Messiah, who, in the fulness of time, should appear as the Redeemer of His people. The description, which he gives of that Redeemer "standing upon the earth," plainly represents Christ as the incarnate Judge of the quick and the dead; while the expression "seeing God with his eyes," is declarative of his belief in the future manifestation of the Saviour in human flesh. Thus interpreted, his design in making this solemn declaration at once becomes apparent. It is evidently an appeal to the Supreme Judge, to vindicate his innocency. His friends had reproached him with being a hypocrite, and despised him as a wicked person; but with him, it "was a very small matter to be judged of man's judgment," for he knew that He who judged him was the Living Redeemer, and that of Him he should "have praise," when He stood at the last day upon the earth as the Great Judge of all, "who both would bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of the hearts."

Every clause of this declaration is replete

with assurance and consolation to the redeemed children of God, amid all the sufferings, and anxieties, and sorrows of life and death.

"*My Redeemer liveth.*" As God, Christ liveth from everlasting to everlasting; He is the first and the last, without beginning of days, or end of years. "In Him," as the eternal Word, "was life." This life belonged to Him by necessity of nature; "for the Son has life in Himself, even as the Father hath life in Himself." But while, as a Divine Person, He possesses an independent, eternal, and unchangeable life, so also does He ever live as our Redeemer. He was "set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was;" and although, in the fulness of time, He died for our redemption, yet He afterwards became alive. Not more certain is it that "He laid down His life," than that He "took it up again." It was not possible that He could be "holden of death." "Being raised from the dead, He dieth no more; death hath no more power over Him." He is "alive for evermore," and has "the keys of hell, and of death."

And, as He possesses life in Himself, so He is the source of life to His redeemed people; He

is their living, and life-giving Head. "As the living Father hath sent Him, and He liveth by the Father; so he that eateth Him, even he shall live by Him." Thus do the redeemed of the Lord, even in this land of darkness and death, live by means of that spiritual sustenance, which they derive through faith in their living Head. "The spirit is life, because of His righteousness;" and though our bodies must die "because of sin," yet "He who raised our Lord Jesus from the dead shall also quicken our mortal bodies." "This mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible shall put on incorruption." "Because I live," saith our risen and exalted Lord, "ye shall live also." He "gives unto His sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of His hand." They are written among the *living* in Jerusalem, and "over such the second death hath no power."

Respecting this living Redeemer, Job expresses his belief and hope that He should "*stand at the latter day upon the earth.*" By "the latter day" we are to understand the gospel age, which is so designated, because it is the last dispensation of grace, that God will ever

vouchsafe unto men. At the commencement of this latter day, Jesus may be said to have stood upon the earth, because He was then "made manifest in the flesh,"—was born, lived, laboured, suffered, and died in this world. To these events the patriarch doubtless looked forward. Like Abraham, he "saw Christ's day afar off," and believed that the living Redeemer should then pour forth His precious blood, as the price of His people's redemption. That the words of Job, however, have reference not so much to the first, as to the second advent of Christ, appears from the circumstance, that he speaks of his own resurrection, as an immediate consequence of his Redeemer's standing at the latter day upon the earth. "And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Now, according to the uniform tenor of Scripture, the rising of the dead is an event reserved for the second appearance of Christ at the last day—the closing day of this world's history, when "the mystery of God shall be finished," and the world shall be judged in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained. When that day of final consummation shall arrive, Christ shall complete

the redemption of His people, by raising up their bodies in glory, and reuniting them to their glorified and immortal spirits, by openly acquitting their persons in the presence of an assembled universe, and by admitting them to life eternal in the heavens. Hence, in the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus is declared to have "obtained *eternal* redemption for us." All the saints that now surround the throne of God, and all who shall yet be added to their happy number, are indebted to Him for their great, their everlasting deliverance, and their celestial anthems continually acknowledge their obligations to His redeeming love. "They cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."—"Thou art worthy; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth."

The confession of the patriarch is expressive of his assured confidence of a personal interest in Christ. He uses the language of appropriation, styling Him, "*My* Redeemer;" nor does

he entertain any doubt of the truth of what he affirms, but, on the contrary, declares his firm and unwavering belief in the promised Deliverer. And it would be well for many to remember, that the redemption purchased by Christ can never be applied to their souls, unless they are, by a living faith, really and personally interested in Him, and have good reason to say with Job, "This Redeemer is *mine*." This assured confidence was by no means peculiar to the patriarch; it has been felt and expressed by many other servants of God, in every age of the world. Abraham "staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, being fully persuaded, that what He had promised He was able also to perform." "Thou hast redeemed me," said David, "O Lord God of truth; now know I that the Lord saveth His anointed." St Paul, also, thus declares his full persuasion of his future felicity, through the merits of Christ: "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him against that day." Nor let us imagine, that there is aught presumptuous in our seeking to acquire the same

full assurance of hope, that was exhibited by these distinguished saints. It is a privilege, which is not only attainable, but highly valuable and desirable, and ought, therefore, to be the object of our strenuous and constant pursuit. Accordingly, we are enjoined to "give diligence to make our calling and election sure." "We desire," says the apostle, "that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end."

From the fact of his having an interest in the living Redeemer, Job infers the completion of his own redemption, by Christ raising him from the dead, and permitting him to enjoy the full beatific vision of God. He knew, that his body would soon be laid in the grave, and moulder away into dust; but he believed, that, being united to Christ, death could not always retain him captive; and therefore, through the mist of the shadow of death, he looked forward to the time, when his home in the dust should be exchanged for a home "eternal in the heavens," and when, in his flesh, for himself, and with his own eyes, he should *see God.* The vision of God, in which he seems to place his ultimate happiness, doubtless refers to his

admission into all the blessedness of the heavenly world. We cannot, indeed, describe the glorious results, which will flow from this beatific vision; for "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." There is ground to believe, however, that the future glory of the redeemed will consist mainly in a likeness to their risen and exalted Lord. "We know," says St John, "that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." This language, it is true, may be designed to indicate primarily an outward and corporeal resemblance, and, accordingly, we are elsewhere assured, that "He shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body," and that "as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly;" but it is applicable also to mental and moral assimilation—an assimilation in knowledge, purity, and happiness. And what is all the splendour of the glorified bodies of the redeemed, compared with that unsullied brightness, with which their souls shall be adorned, when "He who is their life shall appear?" Beholding His glory, they shall be "changed into the same image." Purified from every

stain of sin, and illumined by the irradiating beams of the Sun of Righteousness, they shall shine forth resplendent as stars in the celestial firmament, and, in songs sweeter than the fabled music of the spheres, celebrate the praises of redeeming love. Such was the glory, which Job anticipated, and the prospect of which rendered him so much superior to all his heavy and complicated trials. He knew and was persuaded that, even when his body was laid in the grave, and consigned to corruption, his spirit should be blessed in the presence of his Redeemer, until the morning of the resurrection; but he knew and was persuaded, also, that this intermediate state was only preparatory to the period, when, in his whole nature, he should be perfectly pure, and glorious, and happy,—when his body, ransomed from the power, and freed from the dishonours of the grave, should be reunited to his pure and glorified spirit, and he should enter upon a state of existence, which should never terminate, and never change, world without end. It was for this reason, we apprehend, that he refers, as the chief source of his consolation, to the vision of God, which he expected to enjoy, after "the redemption of his

body," inasmuch as then, and not till then, shall the future glory of the saints be fully revealed.

As the sublime truths, which we have now been contemplating comforted the heart of Job in the time of his greatest affliction, so they are equally fitted to afford consolation to the saints in every age. When, like him, we are reproached or despised even by professed friends, how encouraging the thought, that our cause is in the hands of our Redeemer, who will attest and proclaim our innocence, in the presence of an assembled universe. Standing at the last day upon the earth, He shall "bring forth our righteousness as the light, and our judgment as the noon-day." When afraid lest our spiritual enemies should obtain dominion over us, how does it animate us to think, that our omnipotent Goël has already vanquished them all. "Our Redeemer is strong: the Lord of hosts is His name; He will plead our cause." Through Him, we shall be more than conquerors; for He will make His "grace sufficient for us, and perfect His strength in our weakness." When we see our pious and beloved friends consigned to the gloomy recesses of corruption, and our

hearts faint and sink within us under the burden of our grief, how consoling the reflection, that they are in the hands of their Redeemer,—that "He lives for evermore, and has the keys of hell and death,"—and that, when He shall the second time appear, He shall array His redeemed in the robes of immortality. When we ourselves draw near unto "the house appointed for all living," how delightful to think, that He, in whom we believe, is "the living One," and that He hath promised, concerning all who have "died in Him," "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death."—"Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead." And how transporting the anticipation of that bright and glorious day, when we, and our departed friends, and the whole host of God's elect, shall, at the bidding of the great Redeemer, awake from the sleep of ages; and, shaking off the fetters of the tomb, arise to join the Jubilee of "the ransomed of the Lord." Let this, then, Christian, be the language of your soul:—

"Almighty God, who, by the death of Thy Son, hast destroyed death, and by His resurrection hast assured us that they also who sleep in Him shall rise again; receive my unfeigned thanks, I beseech Thee, for that victory over death and the grave which He hath achieved for all who believe in His name; and grant that I may be kept in everlasting fellowship with Him who is the resurrection and the life; so that, when after my skin worms have destroyed this body, my soul may be received into His presence, and my flesh also may rest in hope till this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruptible be clothed with incorruption."

My Redeemer liveth,
  He shall bid me rise
From the gloomy realm of death,
  There all sorrow lies;
And I need not fear to wake,
Since His voice my sleep shall break.

He will change this body,
  Make it like His own,

When the dead arise from earth,
When the trump is blown,
I shall see Him face to face,
Here my steadfast hope I place.

CATHERINE WINKWORTH.
(*From David Böhme.*)

My life 's a shade, my days
Apace to death decline;
My Lord is Life, He 'll raise
My dust again, e'en mine.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Saviour see.

My peaceful grave shall keep
My bones till that sweet day;
I wake from my long sleep
And leave my bed of clay.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Saviour see.

My Lord His angels shall
Their golden trumpets sound,
At whose most welcome call
My grave shall be unbound.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Saviour see.

I said sometimes with tears,
Ah me! I 'm loath to die!
Lord, silence Thou these fears;
My life 's with Thee on high.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Saviour see.

What means my trembling heart,
To be thus shy of death?
My Life and I shan't part,
Though I resign my breath.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Saviour see.

Then welcome harmless grave!
By thee to heaven I 'll go;
My Lord His death shall save
Me from the flames below.
Sweet truth to me!
I shall arise,
And with these eyes
My Saviour see.

SAMUEL CROSSMAN.

Passing over Jordan.

DEUT. xi. 31.

"For ye shall pass over Jordan, to go in to possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you, and ye shall possess it and dwell therein."

JOB xxx. 23.

"For I know that Thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living."

HOS. xiii. 14.

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

HEB. ii. 14, 15.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy Him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

HEB. xiii. 14.

"For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come."

2 PET. i. 14.

"Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me."

There is a land of pure delight,
  Where saints immortal reign,
Infinite day excludes the night,
  And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
  And never-withering flowers;
Death, like a narrow sea, divides
  This heavenly land from ours.

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
  Stand dress'd in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
  While Jordan roll'd between.

But timorous mortals start and shrink
  To cross this narrow sea,
And linger shivering on the brink,
  And fear to launch away.

Oh! could we make our doubts remove,
  These gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love
  With unbeclouded eyes.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
  And view the landscape o'er;
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
  Should fright us from the shore.

ISAAC WATTS.

rapidity of its current, that the passage over it must have been, at all times, difficult and dangerous; but, at that very season, it was particularly so, being swollen to an unusual height, in consequence of the melting of the snow on the mountains of Lebanon and Hermon; "for," as the inspired historian informs us, "Jordan overfloweth all his banks, all the time of harvest." Notwithstanding, however, of the apparently insurmountable obstacle which thus presented itself, the march of Israel was not obstructed. He, who had accompanied them, during all their weary sojournings in the wilderness, was still present with them, and stretched out His almighty arm for their help. He instructed them steadfastly to follow the ark of the covenant, and the priests the Levites bearing it; and, accordingly, no sooner had the feet of the priests touched the waters of Jordan, than they ceased to flow. "The waters which came down from above stood and rose up upon an heap, very far from the city Adam, that is beside Zaretan; and those that came down toward the sea of the plain, even the salt sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people passed over right against Jericho. And the priests that

bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."

Behold, believer, in this wonderful incident, a beautiful emblematical representation of your passage, through death, into the heavenly inheritance. A brief consideration of a few of the analogies, that obtain between these two events, may, by the Divine blessing, contribute to your edification and comfort.

We would remind you, then, that Jordan *rolled between the desert and the land of Canaan.* Standing on its verge, the Israelites could now distinctly behold the good and fruitful land, which had been promised to their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and to which, under all the fatigues and perils of their desert journeyings, their thoughts and desires had been so long directed. Already they gaze with rapt admiration on the beautiful landscape stretched out before them, and can almost inhale the fragrance of the spicy breezes, wafted from the vine-clad hills, and shady valleys of "the land flowing with milk and honey." Yet, how wistfully soever they might gaze upon the wished-for soil,

they must, ere they set foot on it, cross over Jordan's rapid and impetuous flood. The only way to it was across that river. And even so, does the river of death flow between the wilderness of this world, and the blissful regions of immortality. The Christian pilgrim's everlasting home in heaven can only be reached by passing over "death's cold flood." "It is appointed unto all men once to die." Here, no exemption can be claimed. The heir of heaven, no less than the heir of hell, must, sooner or later, bow beneath the stroke of death. Ere he can climb the holy hill of Zion, he must descend into the valley of the shadow of death; and ere he can plant his feet on Canaan's blissful shore, he must cross over the darkly rolling billows of the river of death, which, with "ceaseless flow," is hurrying away the whole human race into the vast and awful ocean of eternity.

Jordan was to the Jews a *new and untrodden path.* Hence said the officers under Joshua to the host,—"Ye have not passed this way heretofore." In like manner, death introduces us into a new and untried state of being. Not only does it close our eyes upon time, and all terrestrial things, but it ushers us into a vast,

undiscovered region, from whose bourne no traveller has ever yet returned, to declare to us the reception which he found, or the objects which he met with there. There are few, who have not beheld some of their fellow-mortals departing from the land of the living, or felt those agonising emotions, which the death of a much-loved relative or friend excites in the heart; but we have yet to pass over the mystic Jordan ourselves. It is still to us an untried, untrodden, and unknown path. We have never yet by *experience* learned what death is, or what may be our feelings, when the spirit shall be dislodged from its tabernacle of clay; nor have we been permitted to gaze upon the objects of grandeur and magnificence, which will burst upon our view, the moment we are in that state which is now invisible. We are still in the wilderness, and all our conceptions of that mysterious region, upon which we must enter, are necessarily vague and imperfect, by reason both of our imperfect knowledge, and our limited comprehension. To understand it aright, in this dark and distant land, is utterly beyond our reach.

The ark borne by the priests the Levites was

the guarantee of Israel's safety in passing over Jordan. So, too, all who follow the Saviour, by keeping the eye of faith steadfastly fixed upon Him, will be safe, not only during all their earthly pilgrimage, but also while passing over the Jordan of death to the blissful shore of Emmanuel's land. Though we have not passed this way heretofore, yet Jesus, our great High Priest, hath done so, and left the traces of His presence on the road. And as each follower advances, he can exultingly exclaim, "I see the footprints of my Lord in the bed of the river. Here went my Master, my Leader, my Forerunner, leaving me an example that I should follow His steps." Oh, it is indeed a thought replete with strong consolation, that He, who is the true Ark of the covenant, has Himself crossed the river, and knows all the difficulties to be encountered in passing its floods! Because He lives, believer, you shall live also. He hath "abolished death," broken down the gates, and demolished the strongholds of his dark domains. He hath trodden the dreadful path, and smoothed it for your passage. His death is your sure protection, your unquestionable passport through the terri-

tories of the grave. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the first-fruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at His coming."

The subject of death is, to all men, one of the very utmost solemnity. There is something in the idea of crossing this river, at which nature shudders and shrinks back appalled. Yes; in every case it is truly a fearful thing to die,—to pass from this scene of probation and discipline into a world of unalterable and eternal retribution; and this, reader, you will inevitably feel, when the summons from eternity is heard calling you to pass through the swelling of Jordan. At that trying period, however, you have many exceeding great and precious promises of support; for your God and Saviour has declared,—"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee."—"Fear not, for I am with Thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God."—"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Cherish calmness, therefore, in the contemplation of your departure. Fear not, that you shall be left to

sink amid the dark lashing waters of death's stormy river; for, how swollen and rapid soever may be its flood, He, whom, while on earth, the winds and the waves obeyed, shall declare, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." His gracious presence shall go with you; and upborne by His omnipotent arm, you will be conducted in safety to the bright and blessed land, that lies on the further side, where, with all "the sacramental host of God's elect," you will unite in singing the anthem of praise,—"We went through fire and through waters; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place."

"O eternal and holy Jesus, who by death hast overcome death, and by Thy passion hast taken out its sting, and made it to become one of the gates of heaven, and an entrance to felicity, have mercy upon me now and at the hour of my death; let Thy grace accompany me all the days of my life, that I may, by a holy conversation, and an habitual performance of my duty, wait for Thine appearing, and be ready to enter into Thy special presence at whatsoever hour Thou shalt come."

Shudder not to pass the stream;
Venture all thy care on Him;
Him, whose dying love and power
Still'd its tossing, hush'd its roar.

Safe is the expanded wave,
Gentle as a summer's eve;
Not one object of His care
Ever suffer'd shipwreck there.

See the haven full in view;
Love Divine shall bear thee through;
Trust to that propitious gale;
Weigh thy anchor, spread thy sail.

Saints in glory, perfect made,
Wait thy passage through the shade;
Ardent for thy coming o'er,
See, they throng the blissful shore!

Mount, their transports to improve;
Join the longing choir above;
Swiftly to their wish be given;
Kindle higher joy in heaven!

Such the prospects that arise
To the dying Christian's eyes;
Such the glorious vista faith
Opens through the shades of death!

A. M. TOPLADY.

One family, we dwell in Him,
  One Church, above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
  The narrow stream of death.
One army of the living God,
  To His command we bow;
Part of His host hath cross'd the flood,
  And part is crossing now.

Ten thousand to their endless home
  This solemn moment fly;
And we are to the margin come,
  And we expect to die;
His militant embodied host,
  With wistful looks we stand,
And long to see that happy coast,
  And reach that heavenly land.

Our old companions in distress
We haste again to see,
And eager long for our release,
And full felicity;
Even now by faith we join our hands
With those that went before,
And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
On the eternal shore.

Our spirits, too, shall quickly join,
Like theirs with glory crown'd,
And shout to see our Captain's sign,
To hear His trumpet sound.
Oh! that we now might grasp our Guide!
Oh! that the word were given!
Come, Lord of hosts! the waves divide,
And land us all in heaven!

CHARLES WESLEY.

Rising from the Grave.

ISA. xxvi. 19.

"Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead."

DAN. xii. 2.

"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

MATT. xxii. 31, 32.

"But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of *the living*."

JOHN xi. 25, 26.

"Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?"

1 COR. xv. 13, 14.

"But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen. And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

REV. xx. 13.

"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."

Death no terrific foe appears;
An angel's lovely form he wears;
A friendly messenger he proves
To every soul whom Jesus loves.

Death is a sleep! and oh, how sweet
To souls prepared its stroke to meet!
Their dying beds, their graves are blest,
For all to them is peace and rest.

Their bodies sleep; their souls take wing,
Uprise to Heaven, and there they sing
With joy before the Saviour's face,
Triumphant in victorious grace.

Soon shall the earth's remotest bound
Feel the Archangel's trumpet sound:
Then shall the grave's dark caverns shake,
And joyful all the saints shall wake.

Bodies and souls shall then unite,
Array'd in glory, strong and bright;
And all His saints will Jesus bring
His face to see, His love to sing.

Oh may I live, with Jesus nigh,
And sleep in Jesus when I die!
Then, joyful, when from death I wake,
I shall eternal bliss partake.

SAMUEL MEDLEY.

JOHN v. 28, 29.

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."

EVER since the fatal hour, when "man's first disobedience brought death into the world, and all our woe," this earth has presented the aspect of one vast graveyard, or burying-place for her children. In every age, and in every country, the King of Terrors has reigned with undisputed sway; and victim after victim has been swept indiscriminately into the subterranean caverns of his dark domain. "Our fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live for ever?" Generation succeedeth generation, as wave succeedeth wave; and, sooner or later, the all-devouring torrent of mortality will, in its turn, sweep ourselves, and all the

present generation, into the dark and awful abyss of eternity. "Man, that is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble; he cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."

"Like leaves on trees, the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground:
Another race the following spring supplies;
They fall successive, and successive rise:
So generations in their course decay;
So flourish these, when those have pass'd away."

And whither have these myriads gone? Has death thus conquered, and will the tyrant for ever hold captivity captive? Shall his victims eternally lie in the slumbers of the grave? Or, are they destined once more to rise to life and activity? To such inquiries, the voice of unenlightened reason is totally unable to make any satisfactory reply. To an individual, indeed, who entertains just and adequate views of the power of God, reason might dictate, that it is not "a thing incredible that He should raise the dead." But that He *will* do so, could never

have been known, or even conceived of, had He not Himself revealed it to us. There is something so lofty and sublime in the very idea of a universal resurrection of the dead, that nothing less than the authority of Heaven could make the assertion of it credible. But the declaration has come direct from heaven, and proceeded immediately from the lips of Truth Himself.

The evidence by which the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is established is twofold —the evidence of statement, and the evidence of fact.

As the statements on this subject, it may be noticed, that, even amid the shadows of the Jewish dispensation, we find the prophet Daniel testifying, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And to the same effect, is the testimony of Job, of David, of Hosea, and of other distinguished servants of God in ancient times. This doctrine formed a prominent feature of our Lord's ministry; and His language in regard to it is as clear and unambiguous, as any terms which could have been employed to lay it before us. After His ascension, it was very frequently

referred to by His apostles, while prosecuting their evangelical calling; and no one, who receives the Scriptures as a revelation from heaven, can doubt, for a moment, the momentous truth, to which they so unequivocally testify.

But there is also evidence, in support of this doctrine, arising from our Saviour's own resurrection. This great fact, transmitted and certified to us "by many infallible proofs," is frequently presented to us, as a solemn assurance and pledge, that all His people will, in due time, be raised up to everlasting life. In the execution of His great mediatorial work, it was part of His benevolent plan to ransom their bodies from the grave, as well as their souls from death. His resurrection, therefore, was a full and open manifestation, that He had destroyed the power of the last enemy, not merely in regard to Himself, but also in regard to those for whom He died. And indeed, how can it be otherwise? They are not only redeemed by Him, but also united to Him, as members of His mystical body; and, therefore, they can no more be "holden of death" than He was. Their resurrection necessarily follows from the

admission, that Christ, their Head and Representative, is risen. Accordingly, the apostle declares, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming."

The evidence, which the Scriptures give us on this subject, is quite in accordance with the dictate of reason. For, once admitting that God is infinite in power and knowledge, then it follows, that a resurrection of the dead is a possible event; for nothing can be too hard for the Lord. It is as easy for Him to gather together, and reanimate the scattered parts of the human frame, as it was to make them out of nothing, and give them life at first. This doctrine, then, how much soever it may transcend, is certainly in no degree contradictory to, unenlightened reason. Nay, there are many changes which take place around us, which go far to persuade us of the probability, at least, of what we believe on Divine testimony, to be unalterably true.

"Look nature through, 'tis revolution all,
All change, no death. Day follows night; and night
The dying day: stars rise, and set, and rise;
Earth takes th' example. See, the summer gay,
With her green chaplet, and ambrosial flowers,
Drops into pallid autumn; winter gray,
Horrid with frost, and turbulent with storm,
Blows autumn, and his golden fruits away;
Then melts into the spring; soft spring, with breath
Favonian, from warm chambers of the South,
Recalls the first. All, to reflourish, fades;
As, in a wheel, all sinks to re-ascend.
Emblems of man who passes, not expires."

The agency by which the resurrection of the dead shall be accomplished, is declared to be the *power of the Son of Man;* for, at the "hearing of His voice," all who are in the graves "shall come forth." By His *voice* we are doubtless to understand, the sound of the archangel's trumpet, which is sent forth at His bidding, and attended with His quickening power. To this the apostle alludes, when he says, "The Lord Himself

shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God." By what mode the Son of Man shall put forth His mighty power in emancipating the prisoners of the tomb, we are unable to comprehend. We cannot tell how the particles of our present bodies were compacted together at first; how, then, should we be able to comprehend the means, by which they shall be gathered and rearranged, after they have been dissolved and scattered by the hand of death? "Such knowledge is too high for us, we cannot attain unto it;" and to all the difficulties and objections, that may be suggested by our own sceptical tendency, it becomes us to reply, "Hath God spoken, and shall He not do it?" "Can anything be too hard for the Lord?"

Another particular relating to the rising of the dead is, that *the same bodies will be raised which were committed to the graves.* The declaration, that "all that are in the graves shall come forth," clearly implies that, in the resurrection, the body will preserve its essential identity; for, if new bodies were to be produced, and united to their souls, they could not, with truth, be said to come out of their

graves. Indeed, the very term *resurrection* suggests this; it is not a new creation, but a raising up of that which is fallen. And it would be contrary to all our ideas of equity and right, to suppose that one body should sin and another be punished, or that one body should do good and another be rewarded. We know that, in the case of Christ's resurrection, the same body, that was slain and laid in the sepulchre, did rise again; and so shall it be with us, for that which is true of the Head, is true also of the members. But, as we are assured, that we "must all be changed," our bodies will not be, in all respects, the same; "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body;" and "as we have borne the image of the earthly, so we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."—"That which is sown in corruption, shall be raised in incorruption; that which is sown in dishonour, shall be raised in glory; that which is sown a natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body."—"Flesh and blood," in their present state of frailty and sin, "cannot inherit the kingdom of God;" but He will give to every one his own body, even as He gives to every seed an increase of the same kind that was

sown. What is the nature of the change that shall be effected we are not precisely informed, but we are told, that our bodies shall be made to resemble that of our risen and exalted Lord. He "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His own glorious body." When He appears, we shall not only "appear with Him in glory," but "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." These assurances must elevate to its highest possible pitch every view we can take, and every hope that we can entertain of the incorruption and immortality that we are to put on at the great rising day.

The resurrection of the dead will be *universal.* It is expressly declared, that "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth." There shall be a resurrection both of the just and unjust; and as no kind of men, so not a single individual, shall be excluded. Of all the millions of mankind, who have fallen beneath the stroke of death, not one shall be forgotten, or be able to resist the searching summons. But who can conceive the unparalleled grandeur of that day, when the trump of the archangel shall be heard through heaven, and

earth, and ocean's inmost caves,—when the countless myriads of human beings who, from the birth of time, have filled and peopled this lower world, shall all be made alive,—when every grave shall be untenanted,—when the sullen deep shall no longer retain its millions, nor the battle-field the slain of its marshalled armies,—and when the face of our world, so long subject to the sceptre of the King of Terrors, shall be the theatre of universal life, teeming with all who, in every age, have either adorned it by their virtues, or darkened it by their crimes! Here, truly, is a scene of sublimity and grandeur which the pencil of Heaven alone could picture forth, and which even eternity itself can only witness *once*.

This subject furnishes a powerful motive *to seek an interest in the Christian salvation*. "We must all die, and be as water spilt upon the ground;" and if we die without an interest in the Saviour's finished work, unspeakably better would it be for us, if the grave were permitted to retain us for ever in its dark abode, for ours will be a resurrection to shame and everlasting contempt. How solicitous, then, should we be to obtain the resurrection of the

just! With this view, let it be our concern to be "found in Christ;" for "he that hath the Son hath life; but he that hath not the Son of God shall not see life." Nothing can stand us in any stead in the hour of death, but an interest in Jesus; nothing can smooth the descent into the gloomy valley, but a firm and well-grounded hope in Him; nothing can irradiate the awful gloom that hovers over the prospect of futurity, but the smiles of His countenance; nothing can vanquish the last enemy, but a strong and scriptural faith in His all-sufficiency and willingness to save.

This subject also administers *comfort under the loss of pious relatives and friends.* There are few who have not followed Christian friends to the grave; and it may be, reader, that you are even now mourning some recent bereavement. Have you parted with a kind, indulgent father? Have you bade a long farewell to a dear, a loving mother? Have you closed the eyes of a beloved wife, an affectionate husband, or a darling child? Did you unwillingly part with them, and when you saw them carried to their dark abode, were you obliged to give vent to a flood of tears, that would no longer be re-

pressed? Be not disconsolate. The narrow spot of earth, to which they are consigned, shall not be their eternal home. Even now, their spirits are living with God; and although their bodies lie in the darkness of the grave, yet, ere long, its silence shall be exchanged for the songs, and its gloom for the glories of the sky. Weep not, then, when the cold touch of death arrests the current of life in those whom you love, and sends them to "the house appointed for all living." Behold! the angel of hope hovers over the tomb, on the strong pinions of faith, and points the eye of the mourner to heaven, whence we are taught to look for the Saviour, who shall change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious body. Yet a little while, and you shall meet again with the beloved of your heart, never to be separated from them any more for ever. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope. For, if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

We may hence also infer what a *strong ground of consolation the true believer has in prospect of his own dissolution.* It is doubtless a solemn thing to die. There is something in death, at which nature shudders and starts back; and well, indeed, may the heart of the impenitent and unbelieving recoil at the thought of it, for to such, it is an event pregnant with consequences, which time cannot measure, and which the mind trembles while it labours to conceive. But why should the Christian be afraid to die? Death to him is not the end, but the commencement of life, and the grave is the road to immortality. Well may we lay ourselves down in peace, when we remember that Christ has been there before us,—that He hath trodden the dreadful path, and smoothed it for our passage, —that, as the first-fruits of them that sleep, He himself arose triumphant, never more to die,— and that He, who died to redeem, will watch over our sleeping dust, so that, though it may be scattered to the winds of heaven, or trodden under feet of men, not a particle essential to our identity shall fail of being raised up at the last day. Why, then, should we, through fear of death, be any longer subject to bondage?

Rather let us lift up our heads, for the day of our complete redemption draweth nigh. Heaven and the grave are now allied; so that, confiding our souls to our Almighty Redeemer, we may anticipate our dissolution with joy instead of alarm, and at last, meet death with the song of triumph, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the life; in whom whosoever believeth shall live, though he die, and whosoever liveth and believeth in Him shall not die eternally; I meekly beseech Thee to raise me from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness, that when I shall depart this life I may rest in Him; and that, at the general resurrection in the last day, I may be found acceptable in Thy sight, and receive that blessing which Thy well-beloved Son shall then pronounce to all that love and fear Thee, saying, 'Come, ye blessed of my

Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

Spirit! leave thine house of clay!
Lingering dust, resign thy breath!
Spirit! cast thy chains away!
Dust, be thou dissolved in death!
Thus the Almighty Saviour speaks,
While the faithful Christian dies;
Thus the bonds of life he breaks,
And the ransom'd captive flies.

Prisoner, long detain'd below;
Prisoner, now with freedom blest:
Welcome from a world of woe,
Welcome to a Land of Rest!
Thus the choir of angels sing,
As they bear the soul on high,
While with hallelujahs ring
All the regions of the sky.

Grave, the guardian of our dust!
Grave, the treasury of the skies!
Every atom of thy trust
Rests in hope again to rise.

Hark! the Judgment trumpet calls;
Soul, rebuild thy house of clay,
Immortality thy walls,
And Eternity thy day!

VARIATION,
(*From James Montgomery.*)

We sing His love, who once was slain,
Who soon o'er death revived again,
That all His saints through Him might have
Eternal conquests o'er the grave.
Soon shall the trumpet sound, and we
Shall rise to immortality.

The saints, who now with Jesus sleep,
His own almighty power shall keep,
Till dawns the bright illustrious day
When death itself shall die away!
Soon shall the trumpet sound, and we
Shall rise to immortality.

How loud shall our glad voices sing,
When Christ His risen saints shall bring

From beds of dust and silent clay
To realms of everlasting day!
  Soon shall the trumpet sound, and we
  Shall rise to immortality.

When Jesus we in glory meet,
Our utmost joys shall be complete:
When landed on that heavenly shore,
Death and the curse shall be no more:
  Soon shall the trumpet sound, and we
  Shall rise to immortality.

Hasten, dear Lord, the glorious day,
And this delightful scene display,
When all Thy saints from death shall rise
Raptured in bliss beyond the skies!
  Soon shall the trumpet sound, and we
  Shall rise to immortality.

ROWLAND HILL.

"Soon and for ever,"
  Such promise our trust,
Though ashes to ashes,
  And dust unto dust:

"Soon and for ever"
Our union shall be
Made perfect, our glorious
Redeemer, in Thee:
When the sins and the sorrows
Of time shall be o'er,
Its pangs and its partings
Remember'd no more:
Where life cannot fail, and where
Death cannot sever,
Christians with Christ shall be,
"Soon and for ever."

JOHN S. B. MONSELL.

Rest in Heaven.

EXOD. xxxiii. 14.

"And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest."

PS. cxvi. 7.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

ISA. lvii. 2.

"He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness."

DAN. xii. 13.

"But go thou thy way till the end be: for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days."

MATT. xi. 28, 29.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me: for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

REV. xiv. 13.

"And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

In heaven there 's rest! That thought hath a power
To scatter the shades of life's dreariest hour;
Like the sunbeam it dawns on a stormy sky,
Like the first glimpse of home to a traveller's eye;
'Tis the balm of the heart, of sorrow the cure,
The hope that deceives not, the promise that 's sure.

In heaven there 's rest! Oh, how deep that repose!
Life's bitterness past with its follies and woes;
Its passions all hush'd, like the waves of the deep,
When tempests expire, and winds are asleep;
And only soft airs and sweet odours arise,
Like incense of evening that soars to the skies.

Those sounds breathe sweet music, in heaven there 's rest;
I long to escape to the land of the blest;
Inspired by the prospect through life's busy day,
To act and to suffer, to watch and to pray;
Then gladly exchange, when the summons is given,
The tumults of earth for the calmness of heaven.

HEB. iv. 9.

"There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

HOWEVER long he may be on his journey, and however great may be the difficulties and hardships which he meets with in prosecuting it, the Christian pilgrim will at length arrive at the end, and find that end unspeakably glorious. He whose firm step has travelled on to the grave, shall find that grave to be "the golden gate that opens on eternity." But what, or how great, is the blessedness that awaits him, it is impossible for us, with our present limited faculties, to comprehend. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." The perfect knowledge of these things is, for the wisest reasons, withheld from us, in this the land of our pilgrimage. What heaven really is, eternity alone will fully dis-

close to us. Sufficient, however, is made known to convince us, that its glories and felicities will infinitely surpass the most unbounded expectations and the most exalted desires of the sons of God.

To aid the weakness of our conceptions, the Scriptures frequently describe the blessedness of the heavenly world, by similitudes borrowed from those objects, which most powerfully engross our wishes and our pursuits in this life. All nature, indeed, is laid under contribution for images to set forth its inestimable value, and the effect which it ought to have on our desires. It is, at one time, represented as "an *inheritance* incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away"—"the inheritance of the saints in light;" at another, it is described as a *city*—"the city of the great King," whose foundations are garnished with precious stones, whose streets are paved with burnished gold, like transparent glass, whose inhabitants are all righteous, and whose watchmen are angels that excel in strength —a city, that hath "no need of the sun to shine in it, nor of the moon to enlighten it; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the light thereof." Again, it is set forth under the figure

of a *banquet*, where the souls of the guests are abundantly satisfied with "the corn of heaven," the celestial manna, and where they drink of those rivers of pleasure, which flow from the throne of God. It is now presented to our view as a *paradise*, where grows the Tree of Life, rich at once in blossom and fruitage, bearing all manner of fruit, yielding fruit every month, pleasant to the eyes and good for food—where no serpent lurks to destroy, and where the cherub-sentinel only shuts out the tempter and the fear of evil. Then it is disclosed to us as a *kingdom* all glorious and happy, where the subjects have all been warriors in their day, but now are more than conquerors through the Captain of their salvation, and where the crowns they wear, and the sceptres they wield, are such as flourish, and fade not away.

These figurative representations are admirably fitted to give us a very vivid, and powerful, though at the same time necessarily imperfect description of the unseen realities of heaven. They exhibit to us the future abode of the righteous, in colours sufficient to awaken our regard, to kindle our desire, and to animate our earnest and unwearied pursuit. But there is,

perhaps, no representation of it, which is more intelligible, or better calculated to cheer and tranquillise the weary way-worn pilgrim, than that which St Paul gives us, when he styles it a *rest*, or *keeping of Sabbath*, in the presence of God.

We are not to infer from this representation of the apostle, that heaven is a state of total inactivity—that its inhabitants are mere passive recipients of pleasurable feeling, and that they pass the ages of eternity in a condition of indolent repose. Such a state would be utterly incompatible with real happiness. Man is formed for action, and then only is he happy, when in action he is properly employed. Inactivity is the death of the soul, and of all its joys. Accordingly, while representing the future state of the righteous as one of rest, the Scriptures describe it, at the same time, as one of service—of holy discovery, active devotion, and unceasing progression. Our Saviour tells us, that the saints are made *like unto the angels of heaven*, who, with unwearied activity, do the commandments of the Lord, hearkening unto the voice of His word. And, in the Apocalyptic vision of St John, the redeemed in glory are represented

as "*resting not day nor night*, crying,—"Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

The rest, which they enjoy, is opposed, not to the service of God, in which they find their most congenial employment, but to the toils and fatigues, the hardships and labours of their earthly pilgrimage. Theirs is the repose of the *labourer*, when he has left the field, and laid down the implements of his husbandry; of the *mariner*, when, after a tempestuous voyage, he has safely entered the peaceful haven; of the *traveller*, when he has terminated his long and wearisome journey, and crossed the threshold of his father's mansion; of the *racer*, when he has finished his course, and won the prize; of the *wrestler*, when he has conquered his antagonist; of the *warrior*, when he has fought the good fight, and obtained the victory. It is the full enjoyment by them of the blessings of an eternal salvation — of blessings sought for with the earnestness of an unquenchable desire, and struggled for with untiring diligence to obtain, but which are never fully enjoyed, till their labours have ceased, and they have "entered into the joy of their Lord."

In heaven, they rest from *all sin and temptation.* Though renewed by Divine grace, they are here more or less polluted with sin. Even those, who have made the greatest progress in the Divine life, have abundant reason to confess, that many frailties and imperfections still cleave to their nature, and that the deceitfulness of their hearts not seldom leads them astray. Their affections are at best divided between earth and heaven. Discordant principles of action continue to vex their souls, and ruffle their spiritual repose. Though "delighting in the law of God, after the inward man;" yet there is "another law in their members, warring against the law of their mind:" while the consciousness of this internal struggle, is frequently felt by them to be so oppressive, as to constrain them to exclaim in bitter anguish of spirit—"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of sin and death?" But, in the world above, the people of God are completely and for ever delivered from all those evils which they now deplore. There, they are made perfect in holiness, and presented faultless before the presence of the Divine glory, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. No longer does a

body of sin and death weigh them down, and cause them to "go mourning all day long." All their conflicts with sin have terminated, in their being "made more than conquerors." Holiness unspotted and universal reigns through all that happy land. Its atmosphere is salubrious, its language pure, its inhabitants all righteous. There "shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie."

In heaven, there is also rest from *all toil and sorrow.* Here, laborious and painful exertion is inseparable from our condition. The whole lifetime of many is a constant struggle against poverty and want; "they rise up early and late take rest, and eat the bread of carefulness," while, of those who are exempted from corporeal labour, which, after all, forms but a small portion of the primeval curse, the greater number have unseen causes of weariness and anxiety, that render their cup of enjoyment no less bitter. All "are born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward;" and, so long as we continue in this vale of tears, we are liable to feel the pressure of "the ten thousand natural ills that flesh is heir to." And these are sometimes so complicated and over-

whelming, that, in the midst of them, we are apt to become impatient, and ready to "choose death rather than life." How indescribably comforting, then, to look forward to a time, when we shall be entirely freed from the ills of our mortal condition, and to a place where toil and sorrow are wholly unknown, or remembered only as "former things which have passed away!" As, from yonder upper world, sin and temptation are for ever excluded, so neither can the voice of sorrow ever there be heard. Among the ten thousand times ten thousand worshippers, that do service there, there is not one sorrowful or uneasy soul. The voice of joy and praise fills the heavenly temple; on the heights of the celestial Zion, is heard the sound—"Salvation." In heaven, "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain." Those who dwell in it, "shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Every step they take there is through a land of pure

delight; and if any recollection of the sufferings and trials of this vale of tears remain, it will be found only to sweeten their enjoyments, and to increase their wonder, as they view the intricate mazes, through which Divine wisdom has conducted them.

But the rest which remaineth to the people of God implies far more than what is termed a mere negative felicity. It is a rest in God, as their joy, their portion, and exceeding great reward: and therefore must include not merely deliverance from sin and sorrow, but the positive enjoyment of all good. In His presence there is "fulness of joy"—a happiness more than adequate to satisfy the largest desires of our immortal nature. Here, all our happiness is imperfect. Even in the very fountain, from which we draw the stream of enjoyment and of peace, there are often mingled the waters of bitterness, of which it is our doom to drink. No sooner, however, is the soul set free from its prison-house of clay, and delivered from its painful shackles, than it is made a partaker of unmingled bliss, and arrayed in unclouded glory. And it enhances this joy, that it is eternal in its duration, as it is perfect in its nature.

This stamps a value upon it, which all the gilded joys of earth can never boast. "A perpetuity of bliss, is bliss indeed." Here, all we esteem and value is precarious and momentary. Riches often take to themselves wings, and fly away, and cast their possessor, without shelter, and without bread, on the mercy of a pitiless world. Our dearest friends may be struck dead by our side, or steal into eternity before we are aware. The fountains of pleasure, honour, and power, may be dried up, like the dewdrops before the sunbeam. And even though these things were more stable, than experience demonstrates them to be, they must, sooner or later, wither and vanish at the touch of death. But it is far otherwise with heaven. There all is eternal, as the being of the Almighty. Its purity, its joys, and its honours shall never either diminish or decay. "At God's right hand, there are pleasures *for evermore.*" "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and *everlasting joy* upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

Reader, labour to enter into that rest. It is, as you have seen, well worth contending for,

and will far more than compensate for all your present toils and sufferings. And not only so: it will, in the end, be found that

"The more you toil and suffer here,
The *sweeter* rest will be."

Listen, then, to the voice of God, who is now addressing you, as He did His people, in the days of His servant Micah—"Arise and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted." Never again let your affections be engrossed by this present evil world, which is not, and which cannot be your rest; but pass through it, as a pilgrim and stranger, who is travelling to another and better country. And let the hope of that better land support you under all your trials, console you under all your afflictions, and strengthen you against the allurements of sin. Though it be appointed, that, through much tribulation, you must enter into the kingdom of God, yet remember, that the time is short, and that the day of your complete redemption draweth nigh. Possess, therefore, your soul in patience; continue to prosecute your journey, leaning on the arm of your Almighty Saviour and Friend; and rejoice in

the assurance, that you are journeying to a land of everlasting rest, and shall soon reach your eternal home. Be this, then, your daily prayer:—

"O God, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding, keep me ever mindful, I beseech Thee, that this world is not my rest! Teach me to live above it, and to look beyond it. Acknowledging that all my life is but a pilgrimage, may I have my conversation in heaven, and seek that rest which Thou art there reserving for Thy people."

Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
  Thy better portion trace;
Rise from transitory things
  Towards heaven thy native place.
Sun and moon and stars decay;
Time shall soon this earth remove;
Rise, my soul, and haste away
  To seats prepared above.

Rivers to the ocean run,
  Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun;
  Both speed them to their source:
So my soul, derived from God,
Pants to view His glorious face,
Forward tends to His abode,
  To rest in His embrace.

Fly me riches, fly me cares,
  Whilst I that coast explore;
Flattering world, with all thy snares,
  Solicit me no more!
Pilgrims fix not here their home;
Strangers tarry but a night;
When the last dear morn is come,
  They 'll rise to joyful light.

Cease, ye pilgrims, cease to mourn;
  Press onward to the prize;
Soon our Saviour will return
  Triumphant in the skies.
Yet a season, and you know
Happy entrance will be given,
All our sorrows left below,
  And earth exchanged for heaven.

ROBERT SEAGRAVE.

Oh for that bright and happy land
Where, far amid the blest,
The wicked cease from troubling, and
The weary are at rest:

Where friends are never parted,
Once met around Thy throne;
And none are broken-hearted,
Since all, with Thee, are one!

Yet, oh! till then, watch o'er us keep,
While far from Thee away;
And soothe us, Lord, oft as we weep,
And hear us when we pray.

MONSELL.

THE END.

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